THE COVENANT AND THE MANDATE OF HEAVEN

An In-Depth Comparative Cultural Study of Judaism and China

Isaiah 28: 9-12

ט אֶת-מִי יוֹרֶה דֵעָה, וְאֶת-מִי יָבִין שְׁמוּעָה--גְּמוּלֵי, מֵחָלָב, עַתִּיקֵי, מִשָּׁדָיִם.

י כִּי צַו לָצָו צַו לָצָו, קַו לָקָו קַו לָקָו--זְעֵיר שָׁם, זְעֵיר שָׁם.

יא כִּי בְּלַעֲגֵי שָׂפָה, וּבְלָשׁוֹן אַחֶרֶת, יְדַבֵּר, אֶל-הָעָם הַזֶּה.

יב אֲשֶׁר אָמַר אֲלֵיהֶם, זֹאת הַמְּנוּחָה הָנִיחוּ לָעָיֵף, וְזֹאת, הַמַּרְגֵּעָה; וְלֹא אָבוּא, שְׁמוֹעַ

TIBERIU WEISZ

Author of *The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions: The Legacy of the Jewish Community in Ancient China*

Also by Tiberiu Weisz

The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions: The Legacy of the Jewish Community in Ancient China

The Covenant

and

the Mandate of Heaven:

An In-Depth Comparative Cultural Study

of

Judaism and China

by

Tiberiu Weisz

To my wife,
Susan

Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1 The Divinities

Elohim and Shangdi
Attributes of Divinity
Divine Communication
Worshipping Deity
Monotheism and Shangdi
Elohim and Dao

Chapter 2 The Covenant and the Mandate of Heaven

The Chosen Children
Terms of the Covenant
Terms of the Mandate
Origin of the Mandate
Destinies

Chapter 3 The Divine Connection

The Covenant: The Torah
The Mandate: the Liji
The Yin/Yang Correlation
The Celestial Phenomenon
The Divine Protection
The Shekhina
The Divine Presence
The Traditionalists
The Sages
The Literati
The Mishna

The Analects of Confucius

Chapter 4 Challenges to the Jews and to China

A Cultural Journey
Exile and Disunity
Christianity and the One Hundred Schools of Thought
Christianity Challenges Judaism
One Hundred Schools of Thought Challenge China
The Emerging Saviors
Rabban Johanan Ben Zakkai
Jiayi
The Silent Menace
Buddhism
Islam

Chapter 5 The Golden Age of Reasoning

Rambam and Zhu Xi

Chapter 6 Interlude

From Exile to Self-Awakening
The Teaching Societies and the Mystics
Chinese Teaching Societies
Jewish Mystics
The Mystical Writings
The Mysticism of Shabbatai Zvi and Hong Xiuquan

Chapter 7 The Reformers

The Haskala and the New Cultural Movement
The New Intellectuals: The Maskilim and the Zhishi Fenzi
The New Literary Movements
The Utopian Reformers: Herzl and Kang Youwei
The Practical Reformers: Liang Qichao and Ahad Ha'am
The Media

Chapter 8 Modern Times

The Zionists and the Chinese Revolutionaries
The Holocaust and the Great Revolution for a Working-Class Culture

Chapter 9 China and Israel

Appendices

Appendix 1: The Nanjing Massacre and the Holocaust
Appendix 2: Comparative Cultural Table

Addendum

Is Judaism the Yang of China's Yin?
Biblical Influences in Chinese Literature
Derech Eretz and the Confucian Way
No Bread No Torhah No Degree No Honor
Tiger Mom vs. Yiddishe Mamme

Glossary of Chinese Terms

Glossary of Hebrew Terms

Reference List

Index

Introduction

This book is an in-depth, comparative cultural study of Judaism and China from the earliest times to the present. It juxtaposes ancient Chinese records with biblical and Hebrew literature and progresses to show how these two cultures were interrelated. They shared many similar, if not identical, customs, ceremonies, and rituals.

Until now, this interrelatedness was only in the sphere of speculation. Judaism and China had not been in close geographical proximity, nor had they influenced each other, yet their canons displayed a pattern of common cultural traits. This book traces those traits to the primary sources and compares Jewish and Chinese cultures in the context of their relation to each other.

Other ancient civilizations could also claim distinct cultural patterns, but none of them can claim uninterrupted heritage to antiquity as they underwent significant transformations during the course of time. Ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, or any other culture can hardly claim continuity into modern time; today these cultures are different from their predecessors in antiquity.

In contrast, China and the Jews adhered to values that have not changed since the beginning. They followed “the celestial tenets” detailed in their sacred writings, which they zealously guarded against the vicissitudes of history. They preferred the nurture of spiritual well-being to the might of the sword.

What bound China and Judaism to a common destiny that often seemed to run parallel to each other but in opposite directions? The Old Testament bound the Jews to its tenets, and the *Liji* (Book of Rites) bound the Chinese to its rites. The tenets and rites of these two texts consisted of codes of conduct that were remarkably similar. In addition, the authorship of the Old Testament is still under dispute, and in the final analysis, we do not know who wrote it. The same applies to the Liji, which evolved from the oracle bones and was transmitted through oral tradition. Yet, the Bible is a

household name recognized by almost everybody in the world, and the Liji hardly registers with non-Chinese, since it has been replaced by a more recognizable name: Confucianism.

But when comparing the two canons, the tenets of the Liji are as evocative to the Chinese as the Torah is to Jews. The Liji governed the rules of the rites between sovereign and subject, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, friend and friend.[1] In addition, it laid down the ceremonies governing the conduct of each individual from birth to the rites of mourning.

Questions have been raised about the authenticity of the Liji, which undoubtedly was reconstructed from memory. The semi barbarian Emperor Huang (226–215 BCE) of the Qin Dynasty ordered the burning of all books that were not officially sanctioned. Only books written by officials concerning legal matters escaped total destruction.[2] The Liji was among the thousands of ancient records burned during the Big Book Burning Campaign in 221 BCE. However, Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) scholars reconstructed the Liji from memory and in the process interjected their own interpretations.

However, these changes were historical rather than cultural in nature. Undoubtedly, the newness of the text affected its historical accuracy, but it did not alter the fundamental code of conduct of China. People still worshipped as before, offered sacrifice as before, observed the ancient burial and mourning rites and were bound by the same family obligations as before. In comparison, historical evidence (Kaufman 1953, Introduction) has not always corroborated biblical events, but that did not alter the commandments of the Torah. Both the Jews and Chinese closely followed the Way of the Scriptures, relegating historical accuracy to secondary importance. Reading the Liji and the Bible overwhelms more with the depth of the spiritual demands imposed on the adherents than with historical anecdotes.

What is the Liji (Book of Rites)? Chapter 3 deals with the Liji in detail, but here I would like to explain the way I have used it in this book. Under the umbrella name of Liji, I included the entire range of Chinese literature from the earliest records, the oracle bones[3], to the Four Books (see chart below), and beyond.

The Five Classics consisting of the Book of Songs/Poetry(*Shijing)*, the Book of History (*Shujing)*, the Book of Changes (*Yijing)*, the Annals of Spring and Autumn (*Qunqiu)*, and the Annals of Zuo (*Zuozhuan*) covered

issues that dealt with similar topics to the prophets and to the writings in the Old Testament, while books under the heading Liji contained the entire range of the Torah. Nevertheless, in contrast to the Torah, which relegated any additional text after its canonization in the fifth century BCE to the outside literature (the Apocrypha), the Liji was never canonized, and in the course of events, additions were integrated with original literature.

After the tenth century CE, The Four Books consisting of the Analects of Confucius (*Lunyu*), the Great Learning (*Daxue*), the Doctrine of the Mean (*Zhongyong*), and The Book of Mencius (*Mengzi*) became the standard of Chinese literacy, replaced the traditional Liji, and became known by the household name of Confucianism. Any Chinese aspiring to pass the imperial examinations to become a scholar or an official was required to memorize and analyze the content of the Four Books.

The Four Books froze China in time, and only the occasional revival of the Five Classics prompted reforms. They were the cornerstone of the Confucian culture, and they played a critical role equal only to the Torah in Judaism. China absorbed other cultures and sinocized them, and in contrast, Judaism could not be absorbed by any other culture; it remained truthful to its canons. The term *Liji* in this book refers to all the Chinese literature in this chart.

The following chart compares the principal works of the ancient Chinese Five Classics with the corresponding books of the Old Testament. In many cases, the categorization of these books is not as clearly defined, but I believe that overall, this classification is instructive.

Comparative Chart

Titles of The Five Classics In Chinese	**Corresponds to**	**Old Testament**
Shijing (Book of Songs/Poetry)		Song of Songs, Psalms Lamentations, Ecclesiastes
Shujing (Book of History)		Judges, Samuel, Kings
Yijing (Book of Changes/Divination)		Prophets (e.g., Isaiah, Jeremiah)
Qunqiu (The Annals Spring and Autumn) (or, the History of the Zhou)		Chronicles (Jewish history, (or, Rise and Fall of the from creation to 6th century Zhou Dynasty 1100–400BCE) BC
Zuozhuan (Annals of the Zuo)		Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings (History of the in Canaan)

Liji (Book of Rites)	**Corresponds to**	**Old Testament**
Yili (Ceremonies and Rites)		Leviticus
Zhouli(Rituals of Zhou)		Exodus
Xiaojing(Book of Filial Piety)		Numbers

Lunyu (Analects of Confucius)[4] Leviticus/Numbers

Daxue (The Great Learning) Deuteronomy/Leviticus

Zhongyong(The Doctrine of the Mean) Genesis

Mengzi(The Book of Mencius) Deuteronomy

To keep the narrative focused, I have limited background historical and biographical data to what pertained to the topic. I realize that readers of this book could be as diverse as the Jews and the Chinese, each with deep knowledge of their own culture but limited knowledge of the other's. To strike a balance, I have omitted some detail that could be found in any general history book or textbook and highlighted other details that were deemed of little significance in other sources. I hope that these omissions will keep the reader focused on the comparative nature of this study rather than on minute details.

Not that I skimped on details. On the contrary, I have extended the narrative of those cultural milestones I found only in primary sources (and, in the case of China, in Chinese only). I have retranslated most of the ancient texts here in a comprehensive, historical setting, not Chinese *or* Jewish but Chinese *and* Jewish. However, here I encountered a unique problem: how to bridge two cultures that appeared to be in contradiction and, at the same time, complemented each other.

In Judaism, out of *tohu v'bohu*, the Great Void, Elohim created heaven and earth, and in Chinese texts, out of *Taiji*, the Ultimate Extreme—a force prior to the existence of any other—separated heaven and earth. Heaven and earth constituted the two extremes or yin and yang.[5] Judaism claimed that all existing things "exists only through His true existence" (Jer. 10:10), and the Chinese believed all things and events were products of two elements and that nothing would exist without the interaction between yin and yang.

In other words, the same attributes that seemed to be simultaneously contradictory and complementary were what linked Judaism to Chinese belief and vice versa. It follows then that if, for instance, the Middle Kingdom was yin[6] there must have been an opposing culture that matched her in endurance, sustainability, and depth. Is Judaism the yang to China's yin?

I present this book to the layman and the scholar alike with great trepidation. This book has been in the workings for over ten years, and I am aware that I have attempted to cover a vast topic in limited space. In this respect, I chose depth over comprehensiveness. Judaism and Chinese belief have a combined recorded and uninterrupted history of over eight thousand years, and a comprehensive comparison would have entailed several volumes. That was beyond the scope of this book. Events that demonstrated a high probability of cultural relationship guided my writing. Some people may

call them coincidences, but when a chain of coincidences displays an unmistakable pattern, one wonders if they were coincidences at all.

On a personal level, writing this book constantly challenged me with the implied link between these two cultures. I could not look at Judaism from a purely Jewish point of view, nor could I look at Chinese belief from a purely Chinese point of view. Somewhere and sometime in the distant past, these two cultures emanated from one source. One created a religion that was to be at the center of controversy in the world, and the other created a complementary environment that was to be at the periphery of world affairs. Each had been provided with tenets that were characteristic to its own circumstances, yet when those tenets were juxtaposed upon each other, they displayed remarkable similarities (see Appendix 2). The question is, how did they employ their tenets to overcome extreme challenges and survive?

This book is arranged chronologically, but due to the nature of the cultural comparison, it does not follow a strict historical timeline. Thus, for instance, I discuss the messianic movements in Judaism and in China side-by-side, even though a period of three hundred years separated them. The Jewish catastrophes did not occur simultaneously with the corresponding Chinese ones, yet the book treats them side-by-side because similar events and consequences determined their destinies.

In rendering the Chinese and Hebrew texts into English, I have employed a combination of existing translations and my own. In the case of biblical literature, I used *The Holy Bible* (Thomas Nelson & Sons New York, 1952), though I compared the text with the original Hebrew and made changes as I found necessary, based on the interpretation of Hebrew biblical commentators. For secondary Hebrew sources, if they were rendered into English, I employed the existing translation; otherwise, I provided my own. I did the same with secondary Chinese sources.

However, Chinese primary sources posed a different set of challenges. Ancient Chinese texts are very fragmented and, more often than not, they are out of context. Though I constantly consulted available English translations, I made substantial changes and retranslated entire sections to conform to the interpretations of Chinese commentators.

My goal is to treat readers to a unique way of looking at China and Judaism, from inside out, as experienced by those who live with the cultures. I hope that readers also take a renewed interest in Judaism and China and look at them from a completely fresh point of view, not as two “fossils” [7] but

as two vibrant cultures linked by invisible bonds to survive and flourish to the present day.

Last but not least, this book draws heavily on primary sources with interpretations by Chinese and Jewish scholars, which inevitably contain biases, errors, and omissions. I take full responsibility for this and thank readers in advance for bringing those elusive errors and omissions to my attention so that I can append them in an expanded future edition.

Tiberiu Weisz
Minnesota 2007

Chapter 1: The Divinities

Elohim and Shangdi

The Hebrew term of *Elohim* (God) and the Chinese term *Shangdi* (Lord on High) contain certain traits that are unique to their cultures. At the most basic and tangible level, they connected the people to their deity.

Elohim bound the Jews to the Covenant; to its tenets that applied to the three founding patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and to all their descendants, the people of Israel.[8] At first, the Jews did not embrace Elohim wholeheartedly—at least not until Elohim revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush (Exod. 3:1–4:17) and gave Moses the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20: 2–17). That encounter convinced Moses that there was an omnipotent, "supreme Elohim with prophetic visions that stirred the spirit of the people to the very depths" (Schwarz 1956, 18). Moses elevated the divine laws to inspire religious-national zeal that was unparalleled in history, perhaps with the exception of China.

In China, Shangdi chose the Son of Heaven [emperor] and bound him to the Mandate of Heaven, a loosely defined covenant between Shangdi and his son. First the Mandate was bestowed in succession on Yao, Xun, and the Duke of Zhou, the three founding fathers of China, then to their descendants, and through them, it transcended to the people. Shangdi conditioned the succession of the Mandate to the virtues of the descendants of the Son of Heaven who were to follow the Way of Heaven.

In contrast to Elohim, Shangdi never revealed himself, and China associated Him with an omnipresent, invisible, natural force. Nonetheless, that natural force represented the celestial powers that made the survival of both Judaism and China dependent on the fulfillment of the divine tenets. Both deities shared certain characteristics that pointed to a unique relationship that transcended to the people and their culture.

Attributes of Divinity

The link between Elohim and Shangdi at a celestial level becomes more pronounced. Elohim is the creator of the universe and its laws. He is One and "there is no other beside him" (Deut. 4:35). He alone is real, and nothing else has reality like his reality. He appeared in the biblical literature under various names: *Adonai* (Lord), *Elohim*, (God), *El Shadday* (Almighty God), *Zevaot* (Hosts) and YHWH—pronounced *Yehova* (Lord). Orthodox Jews never pronounce this last name, (Yehova); it is written in Hebrew without the marks for vowels because it is regarded as the sacred name of Elohim. Instead, they use the title *Adonai*, Lord.

Whatever His name, Elohim is neither body nor shape, and He is not in the image of any living creature. He is spirit not flesh. He revealed himself to individuals (Abraham, Moses) and, in extreme circumstances, to the people (in the Sinai), but "the essence of Judaism was in the fact that Moses introduced no image in the service of God on account of the dogma that God has no form" (Urbach 1987, 22). The apocryphal literature mentioned revelations through kings and nature, but according to the orthodox view, the mystique of Elohim was the complete negation of idolatry. The Jews would rather accept severe afflictions and punishment than build idols or images of Elohim. "The name Elohim bears testimony to His attributes and deeds and His relationship to man" (Urbach 1987, 37).

Equal to Elohim was Shangdi in the Chinese mind. "Shangdi is both real and trustful, but it is without motion and without shape. He can transmit, but He cannot receive; He can be perceived, but He cannot be seen" (Ware 1970, ch. 6*).* Ping-Ti Ho, a scholar of ancient China, basing his argument on the *Shanhaijing* (Records of the Mountain and Sea), the oldest and richest depository of Chinese mythology, traced the term *Shangdi* (God on High) to the oracle bones. "The oracle bones[9] mentioned a number of gods which reflected diverse tribal origins, but Shangdi reigned supreme over all natural deities" (Ho 1975, 319–320)—actually, Ho uses the term *shen* (spirits), not *gods*.

But Shangdi was spirit; He was not flesh. He was *Shangdi* (Lord on High), *Huangtian* (August Heaven), *Shangtian* (Heaven on High), and *Tian* (Heaven), names that were associated with heaven (Luo 1999, 44–46). There was only one heaven, and there was only one Shangdi. He was the One and the only One. Whereas the Jews could accept an invisible and imageless Elohim, the Chinese needed a tangible, yet equally imageless, Shangdi. No

Chinese had ever seen Him or claimed to have seen Him, which created a problem of image in the mind of the Chinese. He had never appeared before His children; the world "under Heaven" had not known Shangdi, had not built Him temples and did not build images of Him.

While it can be argued that the similar attributes of deities were quite common in antiquity, careful readings of ancient Hebrew and Chinese literature reveal common traits unique to Elohim and Shangdi. Elohim created *shamaim v'arezt*, heaven and earth, (Gen. 1:1), and Shangdi created yin and yang out of chaos. These concepts were so fundamental to both cultures that no prayer in Judaism was considered a prayer unless the name of Elohim was invoked, thanking him for all the things that heaven and earth had produced.

To the Chinese, yin and yang were at the root of every creation, nothing would exist without the interaction between them. "If not for Him, I would not exist, and if I would not exist, I would not be able to receive what He transmitted Heaven, Earth, and I were created, and then all things were [produced] for me" (Ware 1970, ch. 2). Heaven and earth, or more abstractly, yin and yang, were locked in a perpetual motion that enabled the creation of other things.

Forces of nature preceded the appearance of Elohim and Shangdi. "Lord, when you did march from the region of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, yea, the clouds dropped water" (Judg. 5:4). Elohim was alone and portrayed an image of majesty and raw might that impressed the Hebrews. Nature was stronger than humans, and the Israelites realized they needed to worship that power.

The appearance of Shangdi was similarly preceded by gale-force winds, awesome thunderstorms accompanied by lighting and thunder, floods, and drought. It instilled fear and awe into the Chinese mind, and they started to worship natural wonders such as majestic mountain peaks (Kunlun Range, Taishan), unconquerable deserts (Taklamakan Desert), untamable rivers (Yellow River), etc. Other ancient civilizations coped with similar fears, and they built statues and idols as objects of worship. Before the appearance of Elohim and Shangdi, the Jews and Chinese had emulated the custom of other cultures, but after the appearance of each deity, the practice of worshipping icons and images was precluded; the Jews and the Chinese were forbidden to build idols.

The implication of these attributes in a cultural context indicated that

events and trends in China mirrored similar events and trends in Judaism and vice versa. Neither culture could shape its deity in an image, nor could it immortalize them with icons. In Judaism, icons were against the precepts of the Torah, and in China, they were against the sacred ritual of ancestor worship.

Elohim existed in the mind of the Jews, and heaven (*tian*) was just the right image for the mind of the Chinese; it was visible to all, imaginable but out of reach. It was nature in action: “When I represent the harmony between heaven and earth, between the sovereign and people and between father and son, I am called *tian* [heaven]” (Yang 1974, ch.1).

Divine Communication

Another unique feature was the relationship between Elohim and the chosen people and Shangdi and His children. When Elohim addressed the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He committed the Jews to the commandments, and when Shangdi addressed the patriarchs, Yao, Xun, and the Duke of Zhou, He bound His children to “the rule of heaven, the principles of earth, and the action of men” (T’ung-Tsu 1961, 230).

After the completion of the First Temple around 960 BCE, the Israelite priests and Levites communicated with Elohim by offering sacrifice. Sacrifice could be offered only in the Temple, and after its destruction in 586 BCE and the subsequent exile, prayer became the vehicle of communication. Prayers were personal, each individual could pray at any time, at any place, and at his or her own pace. They substituted prayer for the offering of sacrifice because they did not deem sacrifice in foreign land appropriate. Therefore, prayers were instituted as a means of communication, and in order to qualify as a prayer, the pray-er had to invoke the name of Elohim because “I am the Elohim of your father [*Elohei Avikha*], the Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Isaac, and the Elohim of Jacob” (Exod. 3:6).

Invoking the names of the founding fathers implied that their spirits dwelt within the Israelites. Elohim made it clear that those spirits would be the guiding rod of the future. While Moses was chosen to be the messenger of Elohim, he also inherited the task of serving his ancestors. Elohim would guide the Israelites through the spirits of the founding fathers through the

incorporation of their names into prayers. After Moses, Elohim never revealed Himself again, He never talked to a human being again, and He never appeared in any shape before humans. He was the spirit of the ancestors. Whether it was prayer or ancestral sacrifice in China, the spirit of the ancestors instilled a high degree of discipline in humans, and they were considered present at all times. They were the soul of their cultures.

In China, the communication between heaven and His sons was through the medium of the holder of the Mandate of Heaven, the emperor. Ordinary Chinese people could not address Shangdi directly; they had to invoke the medium of the deceased spirits of the ancestors, which involved the offering of sacrifice. The offerings could be performed any time and any where. The only requirement was that they comply with elaborate ceremonies of mourning. This corresponds to the offering of prayers in Judaism.

Chinese literature often mentioned the spirits of the three founding fathers Yao, Xun, and Duke of Zhou, as the models of perfect virtue, remarkably similar to the reference made in prayers to founding fathers of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. During the offerings, one needed to devote his full attention to the task of the ceremony, much like the Jews who had to devote their heart to prayer. Complete devotion to prayer or sacrifice was essential to acceptance by the spirits.

Prayer and sacrifice to the spirit of the ancestors connected the present with the afterlife and distinguished the Israelites and ancient China from other great cultures. “I have not eaten from the tithe.… And not offered any of it to the dead” (Deut. 26:14). Ancient customs, like setting aside part of a meal for the dead or seeing the deceased in dreams, contributed to the belief in spirits. It was not nature that was worshipped but the spirits that dwelt in the sacrificial offerings. The spirits left the body and continued to exist as spiritual Gods, so relatives took care of them, not so much out of love or pity, but because they feared that if they did not, the spirits might harm the living. The spirits instilled dread into the minds of the living.

Though prayer replaced sacrifice, prior to exile, the Israelites replaced ancestral worship with sacrificial ceremonies in the land of Canaan. “Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?” (Isa. 8:19). When Samuel was buried, his spirit rose from the grave and was called Elohim: “I see Elohim coming up out of the earth” (1 Sam. 28:13). The burial site of the ancestors was sacred, for “he who makes a burning of him” (Amos 8: 10) was not only a sign of respect but of sacrifice, too. “Spices were burned for your fathers …

so men shall burn spices for you" (Jer. 34:5).

After abandoning the practice of sacrifice to the dead, the Jews went through a transformation that changed them forever. They were no longer merely a tribe among tribes or equal among equals; they became the chosen people (Feigin 1943, 309). Their destiny was in the hands of Elohim. Had it not been for the unwavering belief in Elohim, the fate of the Jews would have been the same as any other vanished civilization.

China did not go through the traumatic experience of an exile, so she did not need to abandon the ritual of ancestral sacrifice. Instead, China turned those rites into the cornerstone of the culture; they were instruments by which Shangdi controlled His children. This control was not as direct as the Covenant, but a rather loose oversight by the Son of Heaven. The virtuous Duke of Zhou (1027 BCE?), the first ruler of the House of Zhou, realized that in order to keep the people under control, he needed an orderly system headed by a high priest who also acted as a symbol of the nation.

The Son of Heaven acted as a medium between the people and Shangdi, and as such, he was the de facto figurehead and the spiritual leader. He was the only one who could offer sacrifice to Shangdi, and that authority limited his functions to the imperial ancestral worship. Everyone else had the duty to sacrifice to his ancestors, which made this ceremony by far the most sacred in China. "Sacrifice (to the dead) as if they were present; sacrifice to the spirits as if they were alive" (Analects 3:12). Ancestral worship mirrored the hierarchical pyramid of the social ladder where every person knew his social standing and every spirit occupied a corresponding position in heaven. People were concerned only with the spirits of their ancestors, while the spirit of the Shangdi was the sole domain of the Son of Heaven.

Worshipping Deity

Both the Jews (with Elohim) and the Chinese (with Shangdi) believed their deities were universal could be worshipped at any time and anywhere. For the Jews, "the exile was the first time in the history of mankind that a community disassociated the worship of Elohim from its ancestral soil. The principle was established that God has no special home on earth, but that all countries and people are alike before him. This was contrary to the earlier belief that God

has a preference for his own native country and people. The Israelite prophets claimed that He was the God not only of Canaan, but of the whole world" (Finkelstein 1946, ii: 443–444). Nonetheless, the prophet Jeremiah demanded that the exiles of Judah, who had been taken as captives to Babylon, continue to worship the Elohim of their fathers on foreign soil (Jer. 29:7). Worshipping was paramount to the Jews.

Chinese literature indicated that it was also paramount to the Chinese. "Those who follow Heaven will survive, and those who oppose Heaven will perish" (Legge 1974, 296). People in China worshipped "various natural forces such as the sun, the moon, stars, wind, rain clouds, thunder, earth, mountains, rivers, forests, and marshes … But Shangdi [God on High] reigned supreme over all natural deities. He was awe-inspiring, and the Shang King [1127 BCE] dared to ask for his favor only through the medium of his ancestral spirits" (Ho 1975, 320).

The Shang King was the head of the Shang state sovereign by divine right. He was "I the One" (*yu yi ren*), the virtuous man. His role of high priest made his status even more august, adding more elaborate year-round ceremonies at which he presided. He inherited the throne from the deceased king, who, according to Shang religious beliefs, ascended to heaven as *wangdi* (king god) to serve in the court of the Shangdi (Ho 1975, 294).

> It was from the spirits of his ancestors that the king expected the answers which would guide him to practically everything, from intimate personal and family matters to vital state affairs. There was therefore a constant spiritual communion, through sacrifices and divinations, between the living and the dead. (Ho 1975, 321)

The gradual transformation from offering sacrifice to worshipping the spirits of the ancestors was akin to the transition in Judaism from offering sacrifice in the Temple to communicating with Elohim through prayers. With the appearance of Elohim and Shangdi, the Jews and the Chinese ceased to build icons and images; they concluded that rituals and cults were of no use. The deities wanted higher moral standards, virtue, humanity, and righteousness. To appease the spirits, the Jews turned to repentance through prayers, and the Chinese turned to repentance through offering sacrifice to the spirits.

Contrary to the ancestral worship that emphasized the present, the

Covenant had already incorporated the future, therefore it was vague on the past and present, but it was specific on visions and laws. Biblical events and prophecies were attributes of the present, very little was said about the past, and the promised salvation was in the realm of the future. Rules of conduct minutely describing holidays, prayers, education, and diet emphasized the nearness of Elohim. The message of the Torah was that Elohim was directly involved in the life of each and every Jew, and the private life of the individual was under the same divine care as that of the ancestors.

The Torah provided an inner strength that connected the Jews to Elohim where mental prowess was ranked above physical prowess. The Liji guided the Chinese by the rules of virtue (*de*), a code of conduct that contained very specific behavior patterns for the individual and masses, elaborate instructions for ancestral worship, and historical precedents that were to be consulted in the future. *De*, was the "inner strength" of the Chinese that had already taken into account the past and future, but it was vague on the present. Past events were guides for the future, and for this reason, Confucianism that was concerned with the present treated deities as remote, impersonal principles that did not interfere with human affairs (McNeill 1970, 5).

The difference between the appeal of Elohim to the Jews and that of Shangdi to the Chinese was manifested in the religious attributes of the former and the secular attributes of the latter. Elohim created the world, chose the Jews as His people, gave them the written laws, and remained in their minds as the eternal guiding rod. Each Israelite had the sacred duty to pray and thank Elohim for His miracles, and despite the insurmountable hardships, each Jew had the obligation to pray for His graces both as an individual and collectively as a group. Prayers provided the spiritual guide to an uninterrupted direct contact with their Elohim at all times.

Similarly, Shangdi created the world, chose the Chinese as His children, gave them the rule of virtue, and chose His son to implement the Mandate. But in contrast to the Jews, Shangdi was not in the forefront of the Chinese mind. "The way of heaven is high and far away; it is not something ordinary man can attain, so how can humans embrace the idea of an omnipresent deity" (Yang 1974, 70)? How can humans worship an invisible deity when "the world of men had not known Him, had not built Him, represented Him in images, recounted His mythical adventures" (Schwarz 1956, 17–18)?

Monotheism and Shangdi

Despite the fact that Elohim was far away in heaven, the Jews embraced the notion of one deity. Even the unconquerable distance did not deter the Jews from worshipping a single deity, because Elohim was near to the praying soul. The same notion was rejected in China by Confucius (551–479 BCE), China's first sage, who thought that it was a waste of time to try to understand heaven. "He is far from us, so how can we understand heaven?" (Analects 7:29).

Confucius disassociated himself from the affairs of heaven; he had "never discussed strange phenomena, physical exploits, disorder, and spiritual beings" (Analects 7:20). Instead, he concentrated on the terms of the Mandate that included topics on human relations, good government, and proper conduct (*li*). He talked about the importance of virtue (de) in an orderly society and laid down the rules of propriety.

> Without the rule of propriety [li], respectfulness becomes laborious bustle, carefulness becomes timidity, boldness becomes insubordination, and straightforwardness becomes rudeness. When the rulers are firm with their close associates, the people are inspired to behave as humans [*ren*]. (Analects 8:2)

Without these attributes, he reiterated, the country, the nation, and the Chinese culture would not survive. He therefore concentrated on teaching matters concerning affairs of the earth and left the high concepts of heaven to be explained by others.

However, the notion of one deity was not strange to China. The Chinese called Shangdi the deity that ruled "under heaven" (*tianxia*) and encompassed the entire world, though at the time the Chinese knowledge of the world was confined to China and a few border tribes. However, Mencius, the second sage of China, mentioned in his writings that there was a tribe "beyond the pass" (today's Gansu Province) that practiced a belief in one heaven.

> Heaven sent down rulers [*jun*] and teachers to the people. [He] only said, "They will assist Shangdi" … He [Shangdi] made them [the people] remarkable throughout the whole land. Among them were offenders and non-offenders, but Only I Exist. Who under heaven would dare to transgress His will? (Mencius, BK I, pt. ii, 3, 7; Legge 1975, pg 156)[10]

Mencius (372–289 BCE) was a student of Confucius, and he expanded on ideas which Confucius had merely suggested. As the second sage, his importance and influence was equal to that of Confucius, and his lucid Confucian views gained him support from local rulers. He spent much of his time traveling from one state to another, and we have no records of the last twenty years of his life. He disappeared without a trace. His work, the Book of Mencius, part of the Four Books, recorded his conversations during his travels, where he also suggested that he had spent time "beyond the borders"—in the Western Regions. In one of his conversations, he mentioned a tribe that "though among them are wicked people, but if they fast and bathe, then they can sacrifice to Shangdi" (Legge 1975, 330).[11]

If we juxtapose this segment with biblical literature, those who fasted and "washed themselves, cleansed themselves, and put evil deeds out of my sight (Isa. 1:16) were the priestly class of Cohanim and Levites. They were in charge of the holy work or in the words of Mencius, they "assisted heaven." [12] At the head of the priestly class was the high priest, who assumed the role of overseeing the spiritual and religious life of the Jews (Gedaliahu 1954, 28). He warned the people that if they "walked contrary to me.… I [Elohim] will scatter you among the nation" (Lev. 26:28–33).

By the fourth century BCE, the Israelites "were scattered in the four directions" (Ezek. 1:17), and there was no place in the world that did not have, or know about, the Jews.[13] Among them there were sinners and nonsinners, but they were to follow the law: "You shall have no other Elohim before Me" (Exod. 20:3) And: "He is Elohim in heaven above and upon the earth beneath, there is no other" (Deut. 4:39).

It would be true that the literary evidence is purely coincidental, and the concept of one deity evolved in the mind of the people independently, if historical events had not unfolded the way they did. The Jews were uprooted from their homeland and had been tested in unusual circumstances on foreign soil. They had been exiled, followed by dispersion, never to return to their

homeland. Despite these circumstances, the Jews had not changed their devotion to Elohim.

In contrast, the Chinese had only been tested in their homeland and never on foreign land. Thus, the concept of *tian* (heaven) came to indicate a deity that lost its universal characteristics of representing an omnipresent power to be replaced with an innate, natural state of affairs. From the omnipresent heaven of antiquity, "the originator of all things" (Ware 1970, ch.6), to the feudal interpretation that "Shangdi is not constant" to the notion that "tian is the order of nature" (Dubs 1972, 272), Shangdi lost the supernatural characteristics, and in the Chinese mind, he became associated with the way of heaven. But "the way of heaven [tiandao] is far from us; only the way of men is close. Since we do not reach heaven, how can we succeed in understanding it" (Bauer 1976, 8).

Xunzi (298–238 BCE), a disciple of Confucius, warned that since tiandao, the Way of Heaven, was beyond human understanding and natural phenomenon was beyond human control, to go against the will of heaven was to bring great misfortune (Dubs 1974, 272). Shangdi became synonymous with heaven (nature), and the two words were interchangeable. The Chinese no longer worshipped Shangdi; instead, they offered sacrifice to appease the spirits of the ancestors who had ascended to heaven.

This transformation occurred just about the time when the Jews started to congregate and adopt prayers to replace the offering of sacrifice after the loss of the Temple (586 BCE). Such transformations had greatly affected both cultures. The Jews embraced a portable Elohim that knew no boundaries, while the Chinese replaced divinity with a certain pragmatism and realism confined to their boundaries.

Elohim and Dao

While Shangdi, as a supreme deity, began to fade from the mind of the Chinese, the notion of heaven continued to be prevalent in China. However, instead of closely associating it with heaven, another Chinese sage named Laozi (604–531 BCE), the founder of the Daoist school of thought, associated it with nature at work, and to disassociate it with the Confucian heaven, he named it *Dao* (path, way). Dao was associated with the force of

the supernatural through nature, and *tiandao*, the Way of Heaven, indicated the way of the One, the supreme natural being of the omnipresent. The term *Shangdi* was rarely used after that, while *heaven* and *Dao* became synonyms. "Dao created One, and One created Two, and Two created Three, and Three created the world," said Laozi in his book, the *Daodejing* (#42).

Laozi was a contemporary of Confucius, some twenty years older. Laozi was well respected in literary circles and was often called *Laotan*, a title that denoted respect. He was a native of today's Henan Province and went to Loyang, then the capital of the Zhou Dynasty, where he was employed as Keeper of the Records.

Legend says that Confucius sought Laozi out and asked for instruction in the matters of *li* (ceremonies)[14]. In his typical cryptic way, Laozi answered, "I have heard it said that an able merchant, though possessing full warehouses, appears as though they were empty" (Hsiao 1979, 273). This answer is representative of the allusive style that he later employed in composing the Daodejing, his famous five-thousand-character book, but equally important, it betrayed his knowledge of mercantile activity.

Where did he acquire such knowledge? During his tenure in the Zhou administration, he had access to records of astrology, cosmology, divination, etc., sources that he might have consulted to state his cosmological and philosophical theories, but it failed to explain his prophetic visions. The only hint that he made contact with non-Chinese tribes came from a short sentence in his biography that said he had become disillusioned with government, resigned his post, and traveled westward to "beyond the Pass."[15]

At the request of Yinxi, the Keeper of the Pass, Laozi composed the five-thousand-character book called Daodejing (The Annals of the Way of the Virtue) (Sima, ch. 63) and gave it to the keeper. We do not know when, where, or how he delivered his treatise, but it is inconceivable to think that he wrote it before his travels to the west. His writing included information that was circulating among western tribes and travelers, non-Chinese in origin, so either he had a celestial revelation or he obtained it while traveling in the west.

The mystery of Laozi's revelation may rest within the original Chinese version of his treatises, the Daodejing. Though this slim book has been translated into many languages, every translator has admitted that the text is untranslatable; its meaning is as profound as the Bible's. However, no translator or scholar has ascertained any biblical trace. The Daodejing is

treated as an original Chinese classic, without any trace of outside literary influence. Yet a careful examination of the Chinese text, juxtaposed with the Hebrew biblical wisdom literature, revealed some remarkable similarities. Is this a coincidence?

It is improbable that Laozi was in direct contact with emissaries of King Solomon's court (ca. 961–922 BCE), even though ardent Daosits created a legend that Laozi traveled to India, where he taught Buddha. But he did not have to go to India; he only had to travel as far as the Pass, a place that was considered at the time the outside perimeter of Chinese civilization.

In ancient times, the Pass was the commercial and cultural center of the Silk Route, where West met East, where the path of pilgrims, merchants, and religions intersected, where goods and stories were traded. There is little doubt that during his stay "beyond the Pass," Laozi came in contact with other creeds, traders, and merchants active on the overland Caravan Route where he could have learned not only of their modus operandi, but also of other beliefs. Stories of large empires, kings, and religions were freely traded and often exaggerated, but they attracted the attention of the listeners.

If Laozi was among those listeners, the story of the three thousand proverbs of a wise king, who was deeply religious, had never fought a war, had never mistreated his people, ruled righteously, and was liked by his people, could have been of particular interest to his intellect. Who was that king, and is there any evidence that his wisdom transcended into the writing of Laozi?

Recent archeological discoveries indicate that "The relations between the Chinese and the northern tribes—the 'significant others' beyond the Great Wall—have been a recurrent theme throughout East Asian history" (So 1995, 87). During the Zhou Dynasty (1066–220 BCE), cultural, military, and trade relations were on a large scale, and artifacts unearthed pointed to a complex relationship with cultures as far away as India and Arabia (Zhang and Zhong 2001, 3–20).

During that time in the West (ca. 960 BCE), King Solomon's trade routes were greatly extended, and Solomon controlled both the northern terminus of the spice and incense trade and the maritime ventures that had brought him into direct competition with the incipient caravan trade (Bright 1959, 194). His ships reached the shore of *Hodu* (India) (Dubnov 1956, 15). From Arabia and India, trade was conducted on land through the Silk Route to China.

This contact provided China not only material goods but also ideas. We learn from biblical literature that “Solomon’s wisdom and fame spread to all nations. He also uttered three thousand proverbs and his songs were a thousand and five. And men came from all people to hear the Wisdom of Solomon” (I Kings 4:30–34). “Queen Sheba came from Arabia … to test him with questions” (I Kings 10:1).

Stories of this virtuous and wise king were transmitted to India and, indirectly by the way of the Silk Road, to China. It also reached the Western Region, or as the Chinese called it at the time “beyond the Pass,” where Laozi lived among people of other creeds. The three thousand proverbs of Solomon so intrigued the former Chinese archivist that he took up the challenge to compose a five-thousand-character “proverbs of China” known as The Annals of Dao and Virtue (Daodejing).

In the Daodejing, he talks about an invisible, inaudible, intangible, and inactive Dao, attributes that “cannot be further inquired into, and hence it merged into One” (#14). Dao could not and should not be associated with anyone or anything in the universe. “Dao is eternal and has no name, though simple, none in the world can master it” (#32). Moreover, if any one could name Dao, or understand Dao, then it would not be the true Dao. Dao was not meant to be understood; it was meant to be followed. “In it are images, elusive and evading. In it are things, deep and obscure. In it is essence; it is very real, and it contains the truth” (# 21). That is the true Dao.

In addition, the Way of Heaven, *tiandao,* is mysterious and incomprehensible to human understanding, and Laozi warned that “the further one [tries to understand the Way of Heaven], the less one knows” (#47). So when the ancients said, “the crooked shall be made straight,” these were not empty words, they meant, “to attain wholeness in sincerity and return to it” (#22).

These ideas were new to China but not to the biblical land of King Solomon. “[Elohim] can make straight what he has made crooked” (Eccles. 7:13), and only after “we tested and examined our ways, we return to Elohim” (Lam. 3:40). Elohim is an image in the mind of the Jew. He is shapeless, imageless, soundless, intangible, and inactive. He never lets His chosen people forget that: “I am the Lord of your God. You shall have no other gods before me” (Exod. 20:2, 3). Elohim is nameless, and “the Eternal is the true God” (Jer. 10:10), or in the words of Laozi, “there are many Dao, but they are not the eternal Dao; there are many names, but they are not the

eternal name (# 1). By not interacting with them, Elohim caused the Jews to return to the study of His words, and through inactivity (doing nothing), Dao created activity (everything was done) (#3). There were no explanations or reasons for His acts, humans could not question His motives, and any inquiry into His activity was futile.

Even more intriguing is Chapter 80 of the Daodejing. This particular chapter puzzles scholars and translators, since it does not seem to fit into the writing of Laozi. In it, Laozi talks about

> [a] small country with few people; they make many weapons but do not use them. People value their destiny and do not migrate. Although they have ships and carriages, they do not ride them. Though they have armor and soldiers, they do not display them. They reverted in using knotted cords [referring to recording before writing]. They sweetened their food, adorned their clothes, were content in their homes, and delighted in their customs. Though the neighboring countries [could] mutually peek at each other, so that they each [could] hear the crowing of the cocks and the barking of dogs, people grew old and died without interacting with one another. (#80)

Chinese and Western scholars alike theorize this is the political philosophy of Laozi, "though if we compare this ideal government with the various governments that existed in the late Zhou period, we find that the elements of his ideal are contrary to the real conditions" (Hsiao 1979, 299). The various states were in constant wars, and warlike alliances filled the pages of their history.

Why is this chapter so difficult to decipher? I can think of two reasons. First, biblical literature was not widespread in China, and very few, if any, Chinese scholar was well versed in it. They lacked a thorough understanding of the biblical historical period. Second, since there was no apparent historical precedent to this chapter, translators tried to create a historical context. Instead of "[a] small country," translators inserted, "let a small country" or "the ideal land is small," etc. This small change diverted the attention of scholars, and instead, they determined that the text spoke of a utopia. But if we compare this chapter to the stories that circulated about a wise king in the west, it emulates the conditions that prevailed in the small kingdom of Israel during the reign of King Solomon (ca. 961–922 BCE).

King Solomon was no warrior, but he built a military establishment that was “chiefly encamped in Jerusalem, as well as being stationed in the special garrison and fortress cities” (1 Kings 9:15–19), whose purpose was to discourage aggression. Solomon never used the might of his army. King Solomon ruled over a country that was the crossroad of the land-based trade from all over the world; his camels reached the far countries of Arabia and his ships reached the shores of *Hodu* (India, or *Tianzhu* in Chinese). In spite of this, his ships were manned not by the Israelites (they did not migrate) but by the “people of Sheba, and the increasing importance of international trade and economic progress created close bonds between Israel and the neighboring states” (Ben-Sasson 1976, 102–103).

The people of Israel enjoyed a security and material prosperity such as they had never had before and would never know again (Bright 1959, 196). King Solomon also built the Temple to permanently house the Ark of the Covenant, a task that required purity, so he reverted to the use of *nosse sebel*, or burden bearers,[16] people who were not involved in warfare (1 Kings 5:16; Hebrew version 5:29). Laozi referred to this as “revert to the use of knotted cord,” which was a symbol of a return to the purity of the old ways.

What was the connection between Elohim and Dao? By definition, Elohim and Dao have no definitions. H. G. Creel, in his paper *What Is Daoism?*, avoided the pitfall of defining Dao: “I shall not be so foolish as to try to propound a single, sovereign definition of what Daoism is” (Creel 1953, 1). We cannot define Elohim, and we cannot define Dao.

Not only are not definable, they are nontranslatable. *Elohim* is often rendered as *God*, though it really would more correspond to *Lord on High.* Dao is often translated as *Way*, which contained the original meaning of the character—but not the way Laozi used it. Laozi said that “there was something … which existed before heaven and earth … it depended on nothings and is anywhere … it can be considered the mother of the universe. I do not know its name; I call it Dao” (#25). What Laozi actually meant was that even complex things start with simple things. A superior force controlled the entire universe and was beyond the comprehension of mortals. This force was concerned with large affairs and not with individuals.

One was Elohim, and One was Dao, but does the literature support the notion that they were the same? Elohim was the only One: “The Lord our God, the Lord is One” (Deut. 6:4) “and no one else was with him” (Deut.

32:12). He was “The Creator of everything, who can do everything” (Job 42:2), and His words were law to the Jews: “This day the Lord of thy God commanded you to do these statutes and ordinances; you shall, therefore observe and do them with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 26:16). The reason given for this undivided trust and obedience was summarized in Isaiah: “For as heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways higher than your ways” (55: 9).

Laozi’s view is similar but in the Chinese context: “Those in antiquity who attained One were: Heaven attained One with pureness, Earth attained One with tranquility, Spirit attained One with the soul, Abyss attained One with being filled, and All things attained One with life … What made them so is One” (#39).

The One in Laozi is not different from the One in Judaism; both point to a Dao or divinity that has no second and no substitute. Laozi reinforced the Oneness: “There can be [many] Dao [ways], but they are not the eternal Dao [way]. There can be [many] names but they are not the eternal name. Nothing [*wu*] was the name of the beginning of heaven and earth [*creation*]. Everything [*you*] was the name of the mother of things” (# 1).

Had Daoism been a religion in the Western sense, it might have been as monotheistic as Judaism. But the followers of Dao did not have canons, did not pray, and did not consider Dao a divinity. They only followed certain rituals that can hardly be categorized as religion.

People of various creeds worshipped multiple gods in antiquity, but they all vanished. Ancient Egyptian called their chief god Rah. The kingdom of Urartu (Ararat, Jer. 51:27) called their supreme deity Khadi. The Sumerians divided the gods according to their function and had three gods with equal powers: Anu, the god of the sky; Enlil, the god who separated heaven from earth; and Enki, lord of earth. Greece had a god for any imaginable natural phenomenon, but the god of gods was Zeus or Cronos. All these gods had their image in the form of various human figures, something that vastly differed from the Jews and the Chinese.

Neither the Jews nor the Chinese built an image of their One in any form or shape. The Chinese were as emphatic as the Jews were that “Dao possesses nature and possesses trust, it is inactive and shapeless, it can be transmitted but cannot be received, it is attainable but invisible” (Ware 1970, ch. 6). Chinese logic dictated that no images could be built for something that was invisible, something that one had never seen before. They were images

only in the mind of the believer. Therefore, all gods that had their images visualized in any form or shape were not true gods.

"Dao is a void, [it may be] used but never filled: It is bottomless like the ancestor of all things" (#4). "The great Dao flows everywhere; it may go left or right" (#34). The Dao is like an "empty" place that contains everything, and is never filled or as Zhuangzi (369–286 BCE), the most fascinating and mystical Daoist, said: "Pour into Dao, it will never be filled, pour out of it, you can never exhaust it. No one knows where its contents comes from" (Ware 1970, ch.13). No matter where one looked or searched, Dao was everywhere, Dao was nowhere. Dao was in everything, and Dao was in nothing. Dao was so elusive that Laozi warned to "hold on to the Dao of the past to master the things of the present. From this, one may know of the primeval beginning. These are the laws of Dao" (#14).

At this juncture, the Jewish and Chinese concepts of Elohim and Dao are so similar that it is difficult to separate one from the other. Philo (25BCE–40 CE), the first Jewish philosopher—a son of a wealthy Jewish family of Alexandria, educated in both Greek and Latin studies, though his knowledge of Hebrew was doubtful—expressed an idea that could have been said by Laozi:

> God fills all things; He contains but is not contained. To be everywhere and nowhere is His property and His alone. He is nowhere, because He Himself created space and place coincidently with material things … He is everywhere because He has made his power extended through earth and water, air and heaven. (Lewy 1961, 27)

Later Jewish thinkers concluded that Elohim could not be from the ranks of the mortals. Saadya Gaon (892–945 CE), a Jewish philosopher in the Middle Ages, said that "God is the maker of the physical world. As the maker of corporeal bodies, He cannot be of their kind. Since there exist many bodies, he must necessarily be One" (Lewy 1961, 81). Rabbi Moses Ben Maimonides (Rambam) (1135–1204 CE) was more philosophical: "If all other beings were nonexistent, He alone would still exist … His real essence is unlike that of any of them" (Twersky 1972, 43–44).

Both the Torah and Daodejing implied that there was no separate Jewish Elohim, or a separate Chinese Dao; there was only one true One. He was the One and the only One, and He appeared as Elohim in biblical

literature and as Heaven, Shangdi, or Dao in Chinese literature. Elohim appeared in biblical literature under different names, but in the mind of the Jews, it was, is, and always will be Elohim. Chinese also employed different terms for the Almighty like *Shangdi* or *heaven*, but these terms receded from the mind of the Chinese and were replaced with ancestral worship.

Only Laozi refrained from using specific terms for deities because they could be affiliated with certain people or culture. If we call Him Shangdi, reasoned Laozi, the image in the mind of the people will be associated with the Chinese Lord on High. If we call Him Heaven, he will be associated with the Great Void above. If we call Him nature, people will immediately associate Him with the forces of nature. By extension of this reasoning, if we call Him Elohim, it will be affiliated with the Jews. But if we call Him Dao, it is associated with nothing.

Dao's simple meaning is "way, road," and people will have to learn the true meaning in order to understand it. That is *tiandao*, the Way of Dao. On the path of the tiandao walked the chosen children.

Chapter 2: The Covenant and the Mandate of Heaven

The Chosen Children

Solomon built this three thousand years ago,
At the foot of the Wall crowds of men and women still, cry out;
Each noon hundreds throng the narrow streets,
Stand pressed against the Wall and weep, tears flow like springs.

Their treasures sent to Rome, how can we tell their sorrows?
It was during the time of the Han dynasty, the details are lost in the mists of the past.
We too have faced disasters in our two thousand years as a nation,
Foreign invaders brought chaos to China, laid waste our capital under stormy skies.

There is no way I can avoid getting caught up in my feelings for people,
And it was for my country's sake that I brought sorrow to self and family.
I weep for my brother, for my friends, on the cloudy execution grounds,
I weep for their bodies unburied, and our three ancestral graves all now defiled.

One can never abandon one's native country or rest forever undisturbed;
I remain always a Chinese man, looking in the direction of my former home.
Eyes askance, I weep under the coverlet, my spirits torn by doubts,
And seek just to tell my fellow patriots what these Jews are like.

Kang Youwei (1858–1927)
(Spence 1981, 75)

Standing in front of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem in 1908, Kang Youwei, one the most reform-minded Chinese scholars, trained in the orthodox Chinese Confucian teachings, pondered the devotion of those Jews who were praying at the Wall. How could they be standing there, praying and weeping for their return, “next year in Jerusalem”? By all accounts, the Jews should have been a footnote in history. Bigger and mightier nations and empires had vanished, yet the Jews were standing there in front of his eyes praying and asking Elohim for forgiveness and guidance, for wisdom and health, and for the power to be able to worship. This had been going on for thousands of years. Fate had been cruel to them, dispersed them among nations never to regain their country back until recent times. To his Chinese mind, this must have been amazing.

It was not only amazing but strange. The Jews were the chosen people, but it seemed to Kang Youwei that Elohim had abandoned them, left them to a fate without recourse. The Jews were dispersed to the four corners of the world, yet they were here in their sacred city continuing their ordeals as nothing happened. How could they survive and prosper after all the terrible obstacles that history had put before them? Kang Youwei could not answer these questions. He did not know much about Judaism, but these were not merely intellectual questions in his mind; they were practical ones. Those foreigners who had brought the Diaspora on the Jews had also humiliated his country, China. Kang wondered if China would survive.

Several years earlier, in 1898, the European colonial powers had imposed a humiliating defeat on China, demanding extraterritorial concessions. Britain and Portugal forced China to lease Hong Kong and Macao for one hundred years. The foreigners lived in separate concessions and conducted trade with China in zones that were not under Chinese jurisdiction. The entire city of Canton became a free trading zone, and a special zone was established in Shanghai that guaranteed complete autonomy to foreigners. However, most humiliating was the defeat of Beijing, the capital of the Heavenly Empire. It exposed the weakness of China vis-à-vis the military might of the West.

Kang Youwei might have been wondering if the destinies of the two peoples were connected; perhaps the Chinese were not that different from the Jews. Perhaps China could learn from the Jews how to adapt to the circumstances and triumph over the temporary setbacks. Did not the Jews

believe that Elohim choose them to be His people? Did not Elohim give them the Torah and tell them that their destiny lay within whose words? Did not the Chinese also believed that Shangdi choose them to be His children? Did not Shangdi (Lord on High) give them the Liji (Book of Rites) and tell them that their destiny rested within those ancient pages, that their future lay in the past?

As Kang Youwei might have guessed, the relationship between the Jews and China was traceable to biblical times, or more precisely, to the times when they accepted the Torah and the Liji as their irrevocable canons. The Torah gave the Jews prophesies while the Liji gave the Chinese history, and both provided the essentials for survival. On the surface, the two canons shared some common denominators that obscured more profound connections. Virtue, humanity, loyalty, and righteousness were universal to all creeds in antiquity, and neither the Jews not the Chinese could claim propriety. What they could claim, however, was a shared common source.

Terms of the Covenant

According to biblical sources, the Jews received the Covenant from Elohim, and it consisted of the tenets of the Torah to protect and provide spiritual guidance. Similarly, according to Chinese sources, the Chinese recorded the tenets of their conduct in the Liji, the Book of Rites that contained the accumulation of celestial wisdom from the times of antiquity and provided spiritual and practical guidance.

The initial terms of both canons appeared very straightforward, and should the people abide by those rules, they would survive for generations to come. The Torah taught the commandments, statutes, and laws by which the Jews, Elohim's chosen people, were to live in the chosen land, which Elohim had promised to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It also presented a brief account of Jewish history where the Israelites were represented as the people of the Covenant with Elohim whose mission was to fulfill His law in the world, to be the chosen people.

The Liji taught that men's feelings accorded with nature, and the rites accorded with the condition of heaven and earth, acted in concert with the four seasons, and were in harmony with the principles of yin and yang; thus, they were called *li*, rites (Liji, ch. 49). The li mandated the conduct by which

the Chinese, Shangdi's chosen children, were to follow (Hsiao 1979, 186).

The terms of the Covenant were embedded in the Ten Commandments and constituted the cornerstone of Judaism:

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make images of gods or bow down before such images.
3. You shall not take my name in vain.
4. Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy. … On the Sabbath neither you nor anyone in your household shall work. The Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.
5. Honor your parents.
6. You shall not kill.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against you neighbor.
10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor. (Exod. 20: 1–17).

There was nothing too demanding or too burdening. It seemed simple and straightforward. The first bound the Israelites to be faithful to Elohim; after all, He secured their freedom from slavery in Egypt. The second one prohibited the Israelites from building and worshipping idols and images. The third one forbade the use of His name in vain, and the fourth one required the observation of the Sabbath, "to keep it holy." These four commandments were specific instruction to the Jews. The next six commandments were universal in character and could apply to non-Israelites as well. The fifth demanded obedience to one's parents, the sixth prohibited acts of felony, the seventh prohibited adultery, the eighth prohibited stealing, the ninth spoke against false accusations, and the tenth demanded respect for justice. Only by fulfilling these obligations to *the letter*, each Jew could claim that:

The Lord is my shepherd; I [Israelites] lack nothing at all.
He lays me down in green pastures;
He leads me to calm waters.
He refreshes my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness for his namesake.

Even when I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I feel no danger, for you are with me; …
Only goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
(Psalms 23:1–6; Carmi 1981, 165)

Yet, to enjoy the divine umbrella protection, the Jews were to follow the prescribed way without deviations; their survival depended on the strict observance of the scriptures. For that reason, the Torah did not designate a place or time devoted to worship. Worshipping Elohim was the duty of each individual irrespective of circumstances. The Covenant exposed the Jews to the local circumstances and forced them to improvise and devise their own governing system.

Because of these loose directives, the Jews needed neither kings nor emperors; they needed a governing body that extended its authority to each Jewish community throughout the world. Thus, the Jews set up a consortium of elders learned in the way of the Torah to rule on issues modeled on the biblical period of the rule of the judges, called the *Sanhedrin* (high court). This system was rather unique at the time. It entrusted the government to a group of elders rather than to a monarch.

Under this system, the main role of the individual was to "study the Torah again and again for everything is contained in it," (Talmud, Avot 5:25) and thus each person was equal before the law. The study of the Torah led diligent students to find fresh meanings and new approaches to apply to each new situation. Thus, endless reading and re-reading of the Torah yielded numerous interpretations and created an inexhaustible source that the Jews hoped would provide a source for solving their problems. This Covenant imposed a new moral responsibility on the tribes in addition to and beyond that of the individual. "Having been elected en masse, and having heard together the divine moral commands, the people as a whole became answerable for their moral state" (Schwarz 1956, 24).

Terms of the Mandate

The terms of the celestial wisdom were detailed in the Liji, and they covered

the entire code of Chinese conduct, including the art of governing that was ahead of its time. They covered everyday topics on ethics, justice, history, art, and music, and prescribed the precise rites for birth, death, funerals, and mourning. Though the Chinese did not claim heavenly revelation or divine intervention, they claimed that their code of conduct was the work of a celestial wisdom.

According to the earliest records of divination, Shangdi, the Lord on High, bestowed the Mandate of Heaven on the most virtuous ruler who then became the head of the Chinese empire. By the virtue vested in the celestial authority, the ruler also became the spiritual and religious leader. Subsequently, the head of the empire became the Son of Heaven, his subjects the children of heaven and the entire Chinese race came under the protection of Shangdi.

Unlike other empires of the time, the Son of Heaven was aided in the daily life by a governing bureaucracy comprised of scholars and literati. These learned scholars were to China as the ancient sages[17] were to the Israelites They attained their position only after years of study and passing examinations that tested their knowledge of the ancient works of the Liji. By virtue of their knowledge, they became the guardians and interpreters of the tradition. They differed from the biblical judges in that the Chinese scholars were not privy to celestial spiritual guidance. That was the prerogative of the Son of Heaven, and the terms of the Mandate dictated that only the holder of the mandate had direct appeal to Shangdi.

But the Mandate, unlike the Covenant, did not last forever. It lasted for as long as the holder fulfilled its terms. The Mandate was a covenant between Shangdi and His son, and if the emperor neglected his duties, he would be replaced. Chinese historians called this process historical recurrences, while Westerners called it dynastic cycles. The Son of Heaven was the sole mortal to offer sacrifice to Shangdi and communicate the divine wishes to the lower spirits. Approval and disapproval of the emperor started in heaven and ended in heaven. The Mandate was the will of heaven, and mortals dared not usurp it. When Prince Tang, the first emperor of the Shang Dynasty (1766–1120 BCE), sought to overthrow the previous dynasty, the Xia (approximately 2070–1766 BCE), he evoked the name of Shangdi:

> It is not I, the Little Prince,[18] who dares to undertake a rebellious act, but heaven had ordered me to punish the Xia ruler, who had offended

> heaven. Now, I [Prince Tang] am afraid of Shangdi, and I do not dare not to correct this situation. (Shujing 1967, 109; Waltham 1972, 67)

Dissatisfaction or disenchantment with His son's performance was tantamount to opposing Shangdi, in which case the Lord on High could abandon the Son of Heaven and offer the Mandate to a different ruler. In this way, the will of the people became indirectly the will of Shangdi, too. As long as the people were content with the performance of the Son of Heaven, his will was the will of Shangdi (Yang 1974, 6–8). Conversely, if people were discontent with the performance of the Son of Heaven, Shangdi withdrew his mandate.

> The king of Xia [ca. 1800 BCE] could not maintain the virtue of his ancestors unchanged, but scorned the spirits and oppressed the people. Shangdi could no longer extend its protection to him. He looked out among the myriad regions to give guidance to one who should receive the Mandate of Heaven, fondly seeking a possessor of pure virtue whom He might make lord of all the spirits. Then there was [Prince] Tang of the Yin [Shang] tribe possessed the pure virtue and was able to satisfy the mind of heaven. He received in consequence the Mandate of Heaven. (Shujing 1967, 137; Waltham 1972, 82)

This motif took on historical proportions with biblical roots. Historically, the Chinese looked upon heaven to protect the empire, much as the Jews looked upon Elohim to protect His chosen people. The Chinese were afraid that once they lost the protection of Shangdi, the empire would disintegrate and vanish. Fear of Shangdi motivated the Chinese to protect their country from outsiders, and it was the uniting force behind China's survival through the ages. This became a recurring theme in Chinese history. The protection of "under heaven" was in the hands of Shangdi while the protection of the country was in the hands of the people. "Heaven will protect the under heaven [tianxia], those afraid of heaven will protect their country" (Legge 1974, 155).

Since China's knowledge of the tianxia, under heaven, was limited to China, it was always thought that tianxia excluded other places, when in fact, if we juxtapose the Chinese annals with biblical literature, a yin/yang relationship becomes evident.

Yin and yang was the outcome of the separation of heaven and earth from the Great Extreme (*taiji*). They were the two alternating primal states of being without which nothing could exist. In simple terms, *yin* meant dark, and *yang* meant bright. They represented the opposites that coexisted in complete harmony. They consisted of two words expressing one concept, and Chinese philosophers tried to determine whether yin and yang constituted one or two *qi* (mass or substance, as opposed to style). This question became of primary importance, because it laid the foundation of the creation. As the thirteenth-century CE Chinese commentator Zhu Xi wrote,

> Though *yin* and *yang* are two words, they are the vicissitudes of one qi. One advances, the other retreats; one contracts, the other expands. If yin advances, yang retreats, if yin contracts, yang expands … yet they are still the vicissitudes of one qi, therefore yin/yang is one vast space between heaven and earth. (Lou 1999, 22)

The biblical equivalent to yin and yang is *tohu v'bohu*: "and the earth was without form and void [tohu v'bohu]" (Gen. 1:1). Tohu v'bohu was the outcome of the separation of heaven and earth and referred to the infinite void between them. It consisted of two words with similar meaning. While tohu v'bohu was not significant in Judaism (Elohim did the work of the creation), the yin and yang became the source of Chinese creation.

Origin of the Mandate

Ever since the time of divination, the Chinese distinctively differentiated between those "above" (*shang*) and those "under" (*xia*). Theoretically, everything under heaven (tianxia), either animate or inanimate, was included. Chinese logic dictated that if there was an under heaven, then there must have been something that was above heaven, which would be called *tianshang*, "above heaven."

However, this concept was hard to envisage because it implied that animate objects were beyond the limitless sky. Clouds, stars, moon, the sun,

and other inanimate objects could be visualized and worshipped, but an animate object was a different thing. To rationalize this concept, the Chinese substituted the word *tian* (sky, heaven) with the word *di* (heaven), and *tianshang* (above heaven) became Shangdi, a palatable substitute that not only denoted "up in the heaven" but also a certain mystical connotation of a supreme deity.

Gradually, the meaning of the two terms *di* and *tian* diverged. The former referred to the highest divination, the deity of all the deities, more accurately translated as "Lord on High," while the latter referred to everything that was under heaven. A natural process of hierarchical subordination evolved where the word *di* denoted a higher status than the word *tian*.

"The only contact between Shangdi, Lord on High, and tianxia [under heaven, China] occurred through the mediation of the divine being chosen by the Shangdi" (Yang 1974, 3–4). Shangdi did not address the Chinese people. He only addressed tianxia, China, through the medium of the Son of Heaven (*tianzi*), who, in the Chinese mind, was chosen by Shangdi, the same way Elohim chose Abraham. Shangdi chose the Son of Heaven (tianzi) to be the role model on earth, and made a covenant with him to carry out the will of heaven. "Shangdi appointed His child … to be a model of all the lands. He bore his blessing of heaven.…" (Waley 1960, #254)

By virtue of this appointment, the Son of Heaven became the spiritual leader of tianxia, (China) and the sole medium between Shangdi and His chosen sons. But before making the appointment, Shangdi watched people for their conduct and found that only one person named Yao (ca. 2500 BCE) possessed the pure virtue that complied with the tenets of His commandment and therefore was entitled to the Mandate. He became one of the founding fathers of China. The divine continued to watch the virtues of other people and chose Prince Xun (ca. 2200 BCE) to be the next to receive the Mandate of Heaven. He was the only one who

> on the first day of the first [lunar] month … examined the pearl ball and the jade tube [to predict when] to purify [or fast] for the Seven Governors [the sun, the moon, and the five planets]. He then regularly offered sacrifice to Shangdi and six sacrificial [lambs?] without blemishes[19] … to the host of the spirit.… For three years, I have consulted you on all affairs, examined your words, and found that they

can be carried into practice. Now, I [Shangdi] bestow the Mandate on you. (Shujing 1967, 34–35)

In addition, Shangdi also designated China as the dwelling place of the divine. Geographically, China mirrored the opposite of Canaan—huge, abundant in resources, and isolated. It was the right place to implement the terms of the Mandate consisting of rules of governing and antecedent events. His choice was made only after

Shangdi.…
Gazed upon the four corners,
Examined the ills of the people …
In two kingdoms, the government went awry;
He tested and surveyed every land
Shangdi … hated the laxity of their rule,
So he turned his gaze to the West (the Zhou),
And here he made his dwelling place.
(Zhengkun 2002, 2:493, Waley 1960, # 243)

Elohim chose Abraham only after He watched the "people that are under the whole heaven" (Deut. 2:25) and determined that only Abraham possessed the pure virtue that complied with the divine requirements (Gen. 17:2). Abraham had also passed the ultimate test: Elohim asked him to abandon his ailing father and go to a far away land. This test required Abraham to disobey the fifth commandment in addition to making a personal sacrifice. But Abraham complied with the commandment and proved his loyalty and devotion to Elohim. Elohim chose Abraham the Hebrew to be the patriarch of his people.

The contradictions between the two are revealing. Both Shangdi and Elohim made a similar commitment to their people. "Shangdi became great protector of the lands below [China] and the Son of Heaven bore the favor of Heaven" (Waley 1960, #254). Shangdi conferred a conditional blessing on China: only a person possessing attributes of pure virtue could become holder of the mandate. "The Mandate of Heaven … was the purity of King Wen's virtue! May his descendents fast to them" (Chan 1970, 6). A further condition was that only Shangdi could confer the Mandate, which was nonhereditary, nontransferable, temporary, revocable, or suspendable. In case of

transgression, only the Son of Heaven was accountable, and he would lose the Mandate.

In contrast to this was the covenant that Elohim made with Abraham giving him and his descendants "all the land of Canaan for an everlasting protection" (Gen. 17:8). The only condition was that every male descendant of Abraham be circumcised (Gen. 17:11). Otherwise, the Covenant was permanent, hereditary, and irrevocable. In the case of transgression, the entire Jewish community on earth was accountable. Until chosen, both the Chinese and the Israelites were small tribes of no particular significance, and only the divine choice elevated them above the rest of the nations.

Shangdi said to King Wen:
"I cherish your brilliant virtue,
Your prestige has not corrupted your pride.
Your greatness has not made you change your ways.
You do not try to be clever or knowing
But follow the Shangdi's way."
(Waley 1960, # 243)

King Wen (d. ca. 1122 BCE) was the most virtuous ruler and was favored by heaven. He was imprisoned by the ambitious and ruthless Emperor Xin (ca. 1154 BCE), who sought the honor of the Mandate of Heaven. King Wen refused to confer his blessing because the Mandate could be conferred only on virtuous mortals.

While in prison, King Wen devoted his time to studying the diagrams of the Book of Changes (Yijing), also known as the Book of Divinations. He produced an elaborate chart of the sixty-four diagrams complete with commentaries that became the sourcebook of the Chinese culture equal in depth, scope, and importance to the Midrashim in Judaism.

After King Wen's death, Prince Wu and the Duke of Zhou, two of his sons, deposed the Shang ruler and established the first native Chinese dynasty. The Duke of Zhou followed his father's example and became the holder of the Mandate and, according to Chinese annals, one of the founding fathers of the Han people. His virtue set the standard for future holders of the Mandate.

Virtue was the critical component of the Mandate, and it was not a simple virtue; it was an "inner strength" that, "if you can discard your

selfishness, then you can bestow the love of virtue on your people, including your relatives and friends. When they received your kindness, then you can proclaim that you have accumulated virtue [*de*].” (Shujing 1967, 144; Waltham 1972, 87)

This attribute became a focal point of both cultures, and people realized that it was in the realm of the divine, beyond human attainment. Both the Chinese and the Jews struggled with the definition of inner virtue, and they differentiated between the humanly attainable virtues as opposed to the divine virtue.

In China, inner virtue (de) was the most significant gift that Shangdi bestowed on the Son of Heaven, and it was complemented by an outer virtue called ceremonies, or *li* in Chinese. People could witness the ceremonies but could not see what lay beyond them. “The way of the sage king was to offer sacrifice to appease the living and the deceased, to conciliate the nation, to control natural calamities,” said the Liji in the chapter on Rules of Sacrifice, or *Jifa* (Yang 1974, 1). Praying and offering sacrifice were external manifestations and were within the realm of mortals, but the accumulation of inner virtue (de), or inner strength, was only within the realm of Shangdi.

In Judaism, it belonged to Elohim only, where He is described as *hasid*—one possessing loving-kindness, abundant in *hesed*” (Exod. 34:6)—because he brought all into being; as *tzaddik*, righteous (“righteous and upright is He.… ”) (Deut. 32:4) because of His mercy toward the weak; and as a judge (“Shall the Judge of all the earth do right?” Gen. 18:25) because of the occurrence in the world of relative good things and of relative great calamities, necessitated by judgment that is consequent upon wisdom (Twersky 1972, 352). The accumulation of *mitzvoth* (good deeds) was internal manifestation and appeased Elohim.

Shangdi chose to communicate with His children only through the Son of Heaven. Thus, the relationship between Shangdi and His son was like that between father and son (Xiaojing 1973, ch.1). As a father was responsible for his children, so was the Son of Heaven responsible for the entire nation. It was his sworn duty to obey and follow the commandments of Shangdi. Conversely, Elohim chose to communicate with each individual Jew directly. Thus, the relationship between Elohim and His people was conducted through prayers, and each Jew had an obligation to pray daily on a regular basis.

Another subtle but significant difference was the demands made upon

the Jews and the Chinese. Literacy was an obligation of every Jew, because each individual was required to read the Torah every day. Every Jew was equal before Elohim, and each was required to learn the language of the Torah. What was prohibited to them, however, was questioning or making judgments on the acts of Elohim.

In China, on the other hand, literacy was the privilege of scholars and officials. The majority of the population was illiterate, and the masses derived their information from the educated class and official sources. The literati controlled the flow of information and held a tight monopoly on education. They enjoyed special social and economic privileges. What they were not entitled to was spiritual guidance.

Spiritual guidance was the sole prerogative of the Son of Heaven, and spiritual protection applied to China proper and only to its inhabitants. The Mandate contained specific codes of conduct that protected the Son of Heaven on the condition that he complied with the will of Shangdi as determined by historical precedents. Through him, spiritual protection was extended to all the people in China. The Mandate was specific on the art of governing and history but lacked visions and prophecies.

In contrast, spiritual guidance in Judaism applied to each individual, and collectively to the entire Jewish community, while spiritual protection was extended to "all the land that you shall tread" (Deut. 11:25). The Covenant was specific on visions and prophecies but omitted history and guidance on the art of government. The Jews did not have precedents to guide them on self-rule, and the Covenant was short on anecdotal events that could be used for future reference. These parameters set the boundaries of both cultures.

Both cultures followed similar historical course, often in inverse order. In antiquity, they were wanderers. The Middle Ages were their Golden Age followed by a messianic movement, and in modern times, both awakened to nationalist aspirations.

The Israelites wandered to distant places not by choice but guided by the celestial will. They wandered from Mesopotamia to Assyria and from Ur to Harran, roughly six hundred miles northeast in what today is Turkey. Then they continued their journey to Egypt, where they were enslaved. After liberation, they wandered in the desert for forty years, where the divine revelation occurred.

For their homeland, the Israelites settled in

> a strip of land that was a corridor for the armies or warring empires. Repeatedly, the Jews were to pay for this error in judgment by being decimated in battle, sold into slavery, or deported to alien lands. Yet they showed up persistently at the same old place, building anew their little strip of real estate, which has been alternatively called Canaan, Palestine, Israel, Judea, Judah and now Israel. (Dimont 1962, 46)

However, it was strategically located, being the main overland trade route between the West and East, and it brought the Jews into contact with almost every civilization. Once they settled in the land of Canaan, they enjoyed a short period of peace and established a monarchy that lasted for about four hundred years, followed by the first catastrophe, the destruction of the temple and exile. The Jews have never recovered from that shock.

In contrast, China chose "the very fertile plain of Zhou [20]… [and] here we will make a start" (Waley 1960, #240). That vast landmass bordered the impenetrable Kunlun Mountains in the west, which instilled awe and fear into the Chinese mind. Only a strip of sand dunes some five hundred miles long in the northwest connected to Central Asia. The Taklamakan Desert, which earned the nickname of "go in and you won't come out" (Karl 2001, 321), claimed the lives of many traders and adventures. Contact between China and Central Asia was extremely hazardous and sporadic. In the south and east, China bordered the sea, and as the Chinese were not seafarers, navigation and shipping came as a later development in their history.

The Chinese wandered by choice to the nearest arable fields, where they settled and formed communities. The Chinese never wandered beyond the boundaries set for them, and unlike the Jews, they established an agrarian society. "The farmers are primitive and simple and therefore always accept commands … their material proprieties are complex and difficult to move, and therefore they do not abandon their country when in danger," observed the *Annals of Spring and Autumn* (Fung 1966, 18).

Neither in war nor in peace would a farmer abandon his farm. Chinese farmers were of the opinion that no matter who ruled, people in towns and cities would need food, and the peasants hoped to be left to tend their own fields. The rulers happily obliged and kept the farmers tied to their land by legal means. Gradually, farmers became heavily indebted to property owners and lost their independence and freedom. Further restrictions prohibited

farmers from migrating or even having contact with other villages. Only education could elevate the social status of the peasants.

Education raised both cultures above the rest of the world. It constituted the foundation of both civilizations, prizing learning over manual labor. Learning was an obligation to every Jew, and it was to be done in addition to the daily task of earning a living. Jews could not derive financial or material benefit from the Torah; they needed to engage in manual labor. It was a matter of survival; they learned a trade, earned a living, and in the course of events, they became experts in their field and indispensable to economically undeveloped societies. Some scholars have attributed the long survival of the Jews to their skills rather than to their spiritual strength (Graetz 1902, 1; Braudel 1976, 814)

Learning carried a different connotation in China. It was the privilege of the few, who also derived social, financial, and material benefits from learning. Being a scholar became a prized occupation. They became teachers, bureaucrats, and officials, and they influenced the course of Chinese history. From the earliest time, China developed a social hierarchy structured on individuals' education levels and distinguishing between mental prowess and manual labor. At the bottom of the social ladder were the merchants, whom the Chinese viewed as "corrupt and therefore not obedient. They are treacherous and therefore selfish. They have simple properties which are easy to transport, and therefore they usually abandon their country when it is in danger" (Fung 1966, 18). Not surprising, then, that the Chinese detested occupations whose sole purpose was to make a profit.

A step above the merchants were the farmers and manual laborers, and a step above them were the artisans. At the top of this social hierarchy were the scholars and the literati. Missing from this pyramid were the priests, who had no official status in the society. They were the guardians of the temples, rather than performers of holy work.

According to the ancient writings, Elohim chose the Jews for His chosen people, and Shangdi chose China for His children, but was there a link between them? Biblical literature tells us that the Twelve Tribes emanated from the descendents of Abraham and his sons, Isaac and Jacob. Then, Moses led the sons of Jacob, having gone down to Egypt and sojourned there for a long time, to Sinai, where Elohim gave them the Covenant, which set them apart from the rest of the nations—thus the claim that the Torah came directly from Elohim.

Ancient Chinese literature tells us that “the three clans of Xia, Shang, and Zhou melded into one to become the Han Chinese” (Zhang 2001), and “Shangdi bestowed the Mandate on King Wen and to the descendants of Zhou” (Shujing 1967, 111). Subsequently, the Zhou clan became the earliest ancestors of Han China. They recorded their activity through oral tradition, culminating in the compilation of the Liji, —thus the claim that the Liji originated, though indirectly, from Shangdi (Yang 2003, 22–23).

Elohim tied the Jews to the Torah and liberated them from land. But the price of freedom was dispersal among nations. They adapted to and adopted foreign ways, and adjusted to the customs of other nations, but they never compromised their beliefs. Throughout history, they remained outsiders among nations.

Conversely, Shangdi tied China to land and made education optional. But the price of seclusion was the rise of an ethnocentric culture. China saw the world through the narrow prism of their tradition and expected outsiders to adapt to their ways. They had never departed from their beliefs.

Destinies

What does ancient literature tell us about the destiny of the Jews and China? Sometimes they contradicted each other; at times, they seemed to run parallel to each other, while at still other times, they were on collision course. They affected each other, but they never influenced each other directly. The Jews were destined to a life of eternal wandering, while the Chinese were destined to a life of isolation. Unknown to either of them, their fate was loosely connected. At the same time that the Jews regained their biblical homeland, China emerged from isolation.

From the time of Abraham until they settled in Canaan, roughly a period of seven hundred years, the Jews drifted from place to place, from nation to nation with no land of their own. Even the conquest of Canaan under Joshua was temporary. While in Canaan, the Jews transformed from nomadic tribes to a powerful and united monarchy.

But the Jewish monarchy was short-lived. The wrath of Elohim committed them to eternal exile and commanded, “they shall be wanderers among the nations” (Hosea 9:17). Though the external exile lasted only seventy years (586–516 BCE), the dispersion of the Jews was permanent. For

the next two thousand years “they shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it” (Amos 8:12). Not only did they not find the “word of the Lord,” they never found a permanent homeland. The Jews found shelter in every corner of the world but not safety. They were undistinguished from other races, but they could not dispel their strong and unique beliefs.

In contrast, China found safety and shelter only within the isolation of her borders. Geography demarcated safety. The great ocean in the west instilled fear into the mind of the ancient Chinese, a fact that hindered the establishment of contact with people “beyond the sea.” The tundra in the north reminded them of an inhospitable stretch of land that did not sustain a cultured civilization. To make matters worse, it ended with the Taklamakan Desert in the far west, rightfully nicknamed “go in and you won’t come out” (Meyer & Brysac 2001, 321). Many caravans, traders, and pilgrims, not to mention invaders, lost their lives there without a trace.

The impenetrable Kunlun Mountain range stretched from the edge of the desert in the north to the Himalayan range, “the roof of the world” in the south. It contributed to esoteric beliefs. Geography dictated Chinese intercourse with other civilizations, and apart from sporadic encounters, the Chinese understanding of the outside world was formed from ethnocentric concepts (Qi, Zhenlang, and Tianyou, 2002, 5).

The Jews and Chinese were destined to a double role in life, one private and one public. Privately, they followed the way of their scriptures, and publicly, they adapted to the circumstances. For the Jews, only “if you walk in my statutes and observe my commandments and do them all” (Lev. 26:3) would Elohim “make my abode among you” (Lev. 26:11) and “make you fruitful and multiply you and … confirm my Covenant with you” (Lev. 26:9). The emphasis was on “doing all” of the commandments, a phrase that Jews often ignored on the pretext that circumstances prevented them from following the precepts to the letter. However, noncompliance with all the conditions of the Torah condemned the Jews to unimaginable tasks to come.

Elohim made it clear that if “you walk contrary to me, I will walk contrary to you” (Lev. 26:23). In other words, noncompliance with His statutes would bring disproportional punitive measures. Even when Jews were ridiculed for worshipping an invisible Elohim, or when they were kept on the fringes of the political, social, and economic life, they never abandoned the way of the Torah. They preferred to be neither included nor

excluded from the local communities, even though attempts to mainstream them through conversion and exile often failed.

Neither conversion nor exile proved to be effective tools for assimilation. The Jews chose to uproot their families and go into exile rather than change their relationship with Elohim. Living among other nations enabled them to act outside the normal sphere of the social circles, and in a sense, they were pariahs. Yet monarchs could ill afford to relinquish their control of the Jews, who, by the nature of their status, could perform vital services that others were in no position to do. They enjoyed contacts with their brethren in far away places, and they often could perform delicate diplomatic missions that were beyond the reach of monarchs and rulers. Jewish merchants "formed a kind of closed club, known to each other … and they offered to aid [their brethren] in every fashion, giving much advice as to the local places" (D'Ancona 2000, 31). In addition, local Jews also provided the all-important contacts and access to officials.

But when political and religious interest intersected, the Jews became scapegoats, *persona non grata*, and often the Church and monarchs expelled them, only to have them be welcomed by other kingdoms. Surviving among other nations took its toll on the Jews; they had to learn how to adapt to local customs without sacrificing their belief in the Torah, and how to survive in alien lands.

Meanwhile, the Chinese made other cultures adapt to the Chinese way of life. For them "culture developed internally and was not concerned with outside expansion. Therefore, Chinese philosophy and institutions developed a view of the world that self-centered on China" (Zhao and Yifeng 2003, 2). Contact with "beyond China" was sporadic, and outsiders were considered uncultured. Internally, however, the Chinese followed the precepts of the Liji to the letter, and "there was no greater blessing than to have sons and grandsons, who would multiply themselves to 'a thousand, a hundred thousand'" (Ho 1975, 324).

The sanctity of kinship became paramount to the Chinese and created a web of relationships that were as strong as the ties that bound the Twelve Tribes to Judaism. The difference was that in Judaism, all Jews were kin, while in China, only the extended family, including people with similar surname, were kin. Chinese extended families grew to unprecedented levels. According to the census, in 286 CE there were 2,300,000 people sharing four hundred surnames (Yang and Xu 2003, 1:307). Controlling the growth of the

population has preoccupied China since antiquity; people were so numerous that they "covered the mountains and the seas, they worshipped the mountains and the seas, from the south mountains to the South Seas, people mountain people sea" (Wang 1998, 1019). Already in the seventh century BCE, the legalist philosopher Guanzi warned rulers that, "if the people multiply and are not controlled, our destiny is overpopulation" (Huang 1967, 479).

No Son of Heaven could ignore this advice; it was enshrined in the Liji: "The people are the most important element of a nation, the spirit of the land and grains are next, the sovereign is the lightest" (Legge 1975, 14). If the Son of Heaven was to maintain his Mandate, it was imperative that he abide by the guide that "heaven's first consideration is of their [people's] virtue" (Shujing 1967, 100).

This bond between heaven and the Chinese people was similar to the bond between Elohim and the Jews. "For the two families He chose … He established a covenant with day and night and the ordinances of heaven and earth" (Jer. 33:24–26), only "if you can break my covenant with day and my covenant with night … then also my Covenant may be broken" (Jer. 33:20). As day cannot be separated from night, nor yin from yang, neither could the Covenant or the Mandate be broken.

While China was destined to cope with population growth, the Jews were concerned that the day of "I will multiply them, and they shall not be few" (Jer. 29: 19) would not come until the days of the messiah. In the seventeenth century, there were less than one million Jews in the world (Ben-Sasson 1976, 727), while at the same time, there were over sixty million mouths to feed in China (Sa 1971, 4:313).

In the Middle Ages, the courses of Jewish and Chinese history ran parallel to each other, destined to survive the humiliation imposed upon them from outsiders. The Torah had already commanded the Jews to separate from gentiles—"You shall not walk in the custom of the nations" (Lev. 20:23)—and instructed them to "neither be ensnared to follow them" (Deut. 12:30). In reaction to the self-imposed cultural isolation, hosting nations passed laws that prohibited Jews from becoming full-fledged citizens, kept them in legal limbo as stateless citizen and subject to discriminatory laws. They could be quasi-citizens, emancipated citizens, but never (at least in practice) with full equal rights. They were required to live in segregated areas (ghettos) and when in public, wear distinctive badges. The Jews had to learn how to protect

themselves. They were the pawns on the political chessboard of the Middle Ages.

But Jews quickly learned that even though pawns were the most expandable pieces, they could become the most valuable. A surviving pawn could become bishop, knight, rook, or queen and change the dynamics of the endgame. Once the Jews realized the value of the pawn in the endgame, no matter how battered they were, they survived. Many factors contributed to their survival, but in comparison to China, segregation constitutes a common denominator.

While Jews willingly entered the ghettos to preserve their customs, the Chinese raised barriers to protect themselves from outside influences. Far from being a homogenous society, China absorbed many foreign tribes as long as they would abide by the unique Chinese code of conduct. Physical features of foreigners were no deterrent to integration, but code of conduct was. China required outsiders to learn and behave according to local customs (Zhao and Yifeng 2003, 9); only total immersion into the new way of life guaranteed complete assimilation. Those who did not adapt could not be "pacified" and fully sinocized.

Even though tolerance characterized the Chinese attitude towards foreigners, total absorption depended on the mastery of the rules of Liji. In this respect, the Liji, the Book of Rites, erected cultural barriers similar to the Torah. They separated followers from non-followers and protected the believers from outside influence. The complex and cumbersome Chinese ceremonies (li) became the way of life of ordinary Chinese, a fact that made it immensely difficult, if not impossible, for outsiders to have an impact on China. Out of the thirteen dynasties in China, half were outside conquerors, and with the exception of the Mongols, they abided by the Chinese rituals of "three hundred rituals and three thousand tunes" (Zhao and Yifeng 2003, 9); that is to say, there were many rituals and many more variations of those rituals. Foreigners came to interpret that as "kinship and more kinship, reverence and more reverence." The former explored the harmony in kinship relations, while the latter indicated its application to the social order.

Even the Mongols (1279–1368), conquerors who ruled China for eighty-nine years, exerted almost no influence on China. Because of their refusal to adapt to the Chinese code of conduct, they experienced extreme difficulty in governing and finally had to resort to a two-tiered system of government, one for the conquerors and one for the Chinese, administered by

the Chinese. But outsiders who accepted the canons of Liji and acted accordingly, became Chinese.

Isolation contributed to China's mystique, while inclusion resulted in the dilution of Judaism. Paradoxically, the will of the Jews to integrate into local societies led them to ignore events that did not affect them directly. By stubbornly refusing to confront reality, Judaism gave birth to two competing religions—Christianity and Islam—that in the course of history became archenemies.

How did each culture respond to these challenges? The conflict between the Jews and the Christians centered on the interpretation of the scriptures. Christianity challenged Judaism by declaring Jesus the messiah. At the dawn of the first century CE, Christianity constituted a religious minority, and non-Christians held an unfavorable opinion of Christians. Christians lived apart and held that all who did not believe in Christ lived in darkness and were doomed. Such accusations were made at that time against minority groups that maintained a segregated lifestyle, and three centuries later, the Christians made similar accusations against the Jews. Eventually, the accusations turned into action, and that was the beginning of the persecution of the Jews.

The Jews first retreated into their shell, subconsciously tried to ignore the allegations, and buried themselves in the study of the Talmud and the Mishna. But that did not work, as more edicts required Jews to be more conspicuous, to be readily recognized in public. They had to wear distinctive clothing or badges that were markedly visible. Retreat and isolation forced the Jews into a communal lifestyle, and only their devotion to learning preserved their sanity.

If the challenges of Christianity were not enough, Islam was born in the sixth century CE to challenge Judaism. Ever since its birth, it had been testing the endurance of the Jews. At the outset, Muhammad (570–632 CE) placed himself more in line with the prophets of the Jewish and Christian tradition. But when Jews and Christians would not accept him as a messenger of God, Muhammad adopted an uncompromising position and accused them of perverting the revelations given to them: "You have concealed what you were ordered to make plain" (Hourani 1991, 18).

Muhammad became convinced that he preached an unpolluted faith, the faith of Abraham, the ancestor of the Arabs through Ishmael. Islam spread at a phenomenal speed, and in less than two centuries, it had followers

from Spain in the West to China in the East. Its simple message captured the imagination of the desert people, and its language of poetry touched the soul of the Jews. Educated Jews expressed themselves in Arabic, and were swayed by the literary beauty of the Arabic culture.

During the Golden Age of Islam (ca. seventh to eleventh century CE), the relationship between the Jews and the Muslims was amicable; some Jews gained prominence in Muslim courts, while others became renowned scholars. At the time, Jews were so absorbed in Arabic culture that they often forgot their own culture, and only the keen devotion to Hebrew literature and an aspiration to return to their homeland stood between Judaism and complete absorption into Arabic culture.

Paradoxically, isolation caused outsiders to show more interest in China. The more China tried to isolate herself, the more foreigners tried to establish contact. China was content with the Confucian way of life, but when Buddhist monks showed up at the gate of China in the second century BCE, they stirred a lot of interest. Buddhist monks preached a doctrine that the Chinese understood to be a branch of the native Chinese religion of Daoism. China stubbornly maintained that Buddhism was a branch of Daoism. By the time they sorted out myth from facts, it was too late: in the matter two centuries, Buddhism had almost annihilated the Confucian code of conduct.

Buddhism was entrenched in the Chinese way of life and was an inseparable entity. Four hundred years after its first appearance, Buddhism had spread through China with incredible speed, its scriptures attracting increasingly large number of believers. When the Western Jin Dynasty (265–316 CE) fell, the court moved south, followed by many Buddhist monks and Chinese literati. Both groups felt like refugees, and they became more receptive to each other's teachings. The practice of *ge-yi*, matching a Buddhist concept with a Daoist one, became common and inadvertently converted many Chinese literati to Buddhism.

As Buddhist temples and monasteries gradually multiplied, so did the number of followers. Buddhism, like Islam, appealed to the masses and challenged the complex code of religious beliefs. Its simplicity accommodated even the most adamant Chinese critics, who still believed that Buddhism was a branch of the Daoist popular culture. No segment of Chinese society was unaffected by Buddhism, and often Buddhism came to replace the intricate system of rule by virtue. People were ready to devote themselves

to the simple doctrine of the other-worldly, and only the deep rooted Confucian values of family obligation prevented the mass acceptance of Buddhism and the annihilation of China.

In modern times, history and ideology shaped Jewish and Chinese cultures. The messianic movements of the seventeenth century in Judaism, and a similar movement in the nineteenth century in China ignited the flames of change.

After their expulsion from Spain in 1492, the Jews yearned for a homeland; they were ready to abandon the Talmudic path. A century and a half later, when the self-proclaimed messiah Shabbatai Zvi showed up and preached the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, he was not only welcomed but worshipped. Jews wanted to believe that the biblical prophecy was finally going to materialize. Gradually, they diverged from the path of the orthodox thinking and branched out to other doctrines.

Parallel to this was the Chinese experience that started with the fall of the Mongol Dynasty in 1368 and culminated with the Chinese Revolution. On the one hand, China yearned to return to the traditional Confucian principles, but on the other hand, the gradual invasion of foreign ideas changed the face of orthodoxy. Persistent missionary activity, backed by gunboat diplomacy, forcibly opened China to the changes to come. The Chinese messianic movement in the mid-nineteenth century focused on the issue of foreign intervention, and its legacy, as we shall see later, was felt well into the twentieth century.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Jews experienced the revival of national sentiments, while in China the self-awakening movement led to the rise of nationalism. Both movements were nationalistic in character, and both confronted similar obstacles. While Western powers tried to prevent the Jews from settling in Palestine, they also did everything possible to open China—by force, if necessary. The destinies of the Jews and the Chinese were in the hands of the same forces who tried to do one thing to one and the opposite to the other. They pressured the Jews to stay scattered and, at the same time, pressured China to accept Western goodwill diplomacy and trade.

Neither culture was strong enough to withstand the tide, nor were they ready to defend themselves. However, both the Jews and the Chinese knew that persistence would bring the desired changes. In the case of the Jews, it was the Balfour Declaration in 1917, a document issued by the British

Foreign Minister that implicitly acknowledged a homeland for the Jews. In the case of China, it was the May Fourth Movement in 1919, a mass demonstration demanding the departure of foreigners from Chinese soil. Both movements strived to unshackle the chain of traditions and turn the tide of their destiny.

While the Jews and the Chinese focused on the implementation of their aspirations, the outbreak of World War II in 1939 caught them off-guard. The Jews suddenly faced the ugliest side of anti-Semitism that the world has ever known, in the form of the Nazis' rise to power. The Nazis openly advocated the extermination of the Jews and set in motion a system to accomplish that. The Holocaust started with the depersonalization and dehumanization of the Jews, followed by their deportation to concentration camps, and culminating with the Final Solution, machinery to exterminate the Jews. It was a systematic means to eliminate the Jews.

A similar event occurred some twenty years later in China, in the form of the Great Revolution to Culture the Working Class, commonly known as the Cultural Revolution (1966–1968). During the Cultural Revolution, China was turned inside out and upside down, overnight. The old traditionalists went through a depersonalizing and dehumanizing process that culminated with the re-education camps. It was a systematic means to eradicate the old tradition.

Throughout history, the Jews and China shared common destinies. For the Jews, this rested with the prophecies of the Torah, and for the Chinese, in the ancient sayings of the Liji. Without the Torah, the Jews would have vanished, and without the Liji, China would have followed in the footsteps of other great ancient civilization and vanished. However, the Torah and the Liji prevented that from happening and provided essential tools for survival; they were open books to be read by all and understood by the few. Scholars had written thousands of books trying to explain these canons, but yet they have to say what the Torah and the Liji each said in one volume. The Torah and the Liji are as intricately linked as the yin and yang, and they contain a recipe for the survival of these two cultures that the Jews and the Chinese have yet to discover.

Chapter 3: The Divine Connection

Many civilizations, such as the Hindu and the Egyptians, were as ancient as the Jews and the Chinese, but their cultural zeniths declined, becoming of interest only to historians. Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia were great empires, yet after several centuries, they became footnotes in history. The Greeks and Romans enjoyed their heydays, then faded into obscurity. Today's Greek and Roman civilizations are not the same as those in the times of their empires. But the Jews today are bound by the same Covenant that they made with Elohim, and the Chinese are bound by the same Mandate that they accepted in antiquity.

The Covenant between Elohim and the Jews is as binding today as it was during the time of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Once the Jews accepted the Torah, they could never abandon it. Jewish tenets taught the commandments, statutes, and laws by which the Jews were to live. The Mandate given to China originated from "the li [proper conduct] hat has three roots: heaven and earth gave birth to it; the ancestors molded it; and the rulers and teachers used to govern by it" (Xunzi 1974, II: 360). Once the Chinese accepted the Mandate, they could never abandon it, either. The Liji (Book of Rites) guided the Chinese way of life from antiquity to today.

If Jews in biblical times could have read the Liji, they would have concluded that it was not different from the Torah. Conversely, if ancient Chinese sages could have read the Torah, they would have reached a similar conclusion.

The Covenant: The Torah

The Jews needed to follow the words of the scriptures. Any transgression was considered a sin and was followed by appropriate punishment. Punishment became an integral part of the destiny of Israel (Guttmann 1953, 19), where past and future were of no consequence. The Torah had no room for history, government, or social classes. The sacred words of Elohim were paramount

to the Jews, and they were beyond human comprehension. To survive in the world of humans, Elohim commanded the Jews to study the Torah, which contained practical solutions to salvation. They became the "People of the Book."

The main message of the Torah contained prophesies and visions. History was only a footnote to the laws of conduct and not an end in itself. The Torah progressed with few anecdotes or precedents and was devoid of guidance. Events followed events, and at the center of each event was Elohim. There was no past to guide the future, and the future was unpredictable. Although Jews were subjected to repeated humiliations, economic depravation, sanctions, persecution, forced conversions, and exile, each incident was atypical enough to prevent duplication and thus made it inapplicable to different times and places. The Jewish experience in Canaan, for example, could not be compared to the Jews in ancient Egypt or to the exiled Jews in Babylon. The Jews of Spain could not even fathom that after several centuries of integration, they would be uprooted and forced to leave. And there was no precedent to the Holocaust in Jewish history.

The only common denominator was the Jewish reaction: after each catastrophe, they returned to their roots, the Torah. They re-examined the cryptic messages, hoping to gain a fresh understanding. This constant search for meaning and intent was recorded meticulously, and it became the core of Jewish conduct from the canonization of the Torah in the fourth century BCE until the Jewish emancipation in the nineteenth century CE:

> Postexilic Judaism therefore was established upon the late prophetic and Ezra foundation. From the first source, it drew its knowledge of God, its passion for justice, its vision of a new Zion; from the Ezraic, its will to translate prophetic ideals into the practice of daily life, its emphasis on learning, its dedication to the community. The cultivation of these virtues made for the spiritual unity of Israel under the various constellations and fated difficulties. The synagogue, school, and home were the center of this culture, while the temple in Jerusalem remained its official symbol. True, the priest ministered to the elaborate rituals of the functions of Judaism was open to all. Among the interpreters of the law, bearers of tradition, teachers of wisdom, and leaders of the communities, we find priest and laymen traditionalists and reformers, rich and poor, sons of Israel or descendants of heathens. What mattered

here were knowledge, conduct, and dedication. (Glatzer 1969, 5)

The Mandate: The Liji

In China, the Son of Heaven needed to follow the rites of Liji. Failure to follow in the footsteps of ancient sages angered the spirits, who displayed their displeasure through ferocious natural disasters followed by social unrest. It signaled the beginning of the end of the current Mandate. The terms of Mandate were detailed in the Liji, and within rested practical solutions to institutions, governments, and conduct. The Chinese became the "People Who Cherish the Written Word" (*Jingxi Zizhi*).[21]

What is the Liji? Its original form emanated from the eleventh century BCE and comprised three books. The Yili, (Ceremonies and Rituals), consisted of seventeen chapters detailing the rules of conducts of family life. The Zhouli (Rituals of Zhou), attributed to the Duke of Zhou (ca. 1130 BCE), reconstructed the way of the government structure in the time of the Zhou Dynasty (1027–770 BCE). The Liji (Book of Rites), forty-nine chapters, contained rules and regulations that governed ceremonies, such as music and poetry, and several chapters were devoted to the rights of women.

Unfortunately, the original Liji was lost during the lengthy anti-intellectual campaign in 221 BCE. In the first century CE, Han scholars collated and added what they remembered of the Yili (Ceremonies and Rites), the Zhouli (Rituals of Zhou), the Shujing (Book of History), and the Shijing (Book of Poetry) into the main body of the Book of Rites. Enhanced with the Daxue (Great Learning), the Zhongyong (Doctrine of the Means), the Analects of Confucius, and the Book of Mencius, commonly known as the Four Books), the Liji, fulfilled the same role as the Torah did for the Jews. In essence, it contained similar topics to the Old Testament, though it was heavy on past events and light on visions and prophecies.

Contrary to the Torah, the Liji was never officially canonized, yet it was treated as the foundation of the Confucian orthodoxy, containing the sacred tenets of the Chinese code of conduct. Its impact China is only comparable to the impact of the Torah on the Jews.

The main tenet of the Liji (Book of Rites) comprised of the sayings of the ancient sages. Though the term li[22] is usually translated as rites,

ceremonies or propriety, the Chinese think of it as “the rule of heaven, the principle of earth and the action of men” (T’ung Ch’u 1961, 230). “Li are those things by which [a ruler] maintains his state, carries out his policy and order, and does not lose his people” (*ibid*). They included everything from the enjoyment of food to the Five Relationships to historical anecdotes and to precedents, and emphasized that current events stemmed from similar episodes in the past; therefore, the future was contained in the past. History and continuity was the cornerstone of China’s survival. Ancient sages cautioned that the future lay within the past, and each generation should follow in the footsteps of former generations, not to deviate from tiandao, the way of the Dao.

Emperors came and went, dynasties rose and fell, but the bedrock of Confucianism was cemented in the rules of ancestral worship, filial piety, virtue, and loyalty. “The li [rules of propriety] are the ultimate distinction in governing; they are the foundation of a strong country, and they are the majesty of the Way and the focus of honor. Kings and rulers who followed [the Rites] attained the Mandate of heaven, those who did not follow, they had failed” (Xunzi 1974, ii: 355).

The Yin/Yang Correlation

In comparing the two scriptures, one finds that the Torah and the Liji complement and contrast with each other. The former offered visions that were abstract, empowering future generations to adjust according to local conditions. The latter incorporated detailed conduct of the past that had bearing on the present and future. Jewish history was guided by the abstract, while Chinese history was governed by the concrete, and they were interlocked and often moved in opposite directions, similar to the perpetual motion of yin and yang. The Jews were few and dispersed among nations; the Chinese were many and united as a nation. The Jews displayed the traits of autonomy; each community was on its own, devoid of a monarch or central government. At the head of Chinese society was an emperor who ruled with the aid of a centralized bureaucracy.

Even the inception of the world, according to the two worldviews, was in inverse order. According to the Torah, Elohim created light, followed

by heaven and earth, followed by topography (rivers, mountains), and followed by vegetation, birds, beast, and finally man in the male form of Adam. Woman was created as a companion to man and therefore subject to him (Gen. 1).

The creation, according to the Chinese legend, stemmed from a divine who created the world in inverse sequence to the Jewish myth. He first created man in the form of Pangu, a hairy wild creature with divine powers, who in turn created heaven and earth, separated Yin from Yang (light from dark), and created mountains rivers, animals, birds, and vegetation. Missing from the chain of creation was a companion to man. However, that was not necessary because the concept of yin and yang implied that for each yin there was a corresponding yang, and by extension, opposite a man there was a woman.

The yin and yang were in perpetual motion, and the force of gravity kept them interlocked permanently. The yin could not exist without the yang, and vice versa; nothing in the universe could exist without the constant movement of yin and yang, without which life was unsustainable. Applying this concept to the survival of the Chinese, if China was the yin, then there must have been a balanced culture to keep China in the perpetual existence. Who was that yang?

The yin and yang correlation between the Jews and the Chinese was first implied in their respective names. “Your name shall no more be called Jacob but Israel” (Gen. 32: 27), a change that was not incidental. By adopting the name of Israel, Jacob set the stage for the destiny of the chosen people to be the messenger to the Elohim. The name Israel in Hebrew, ישר אל, meant “straight to El”[23] and implied that each individual from the tribes of Israel would have a direct line of communication with the Elohim. “The Jewish conception of Elohim and His relation to nature and human beings was a combination of both transcendence and immanence. God is supramundane but not extramundane, exalted but not remote. Elohim is far away in the heaven but near to the praying soul” (Birnbaum 1979, 34).

Individual Jews could communicate with Elohim directly by the means of prayers, and that was not limited to time or place. Feeling privileged to such a relationship, the Jews developed a view of the world that said they were unique, far above other civilizations. They became eccentric, self-assured, and self-confident, and they believed that all the calamities were mere tests. No matter how bitter was their affliction, Elohim “would not blot

out the name of Israel from *under heaven*"[24] (2 Kings 14:27).

Neither would Shangdi blot out the name of China from tianxia, under heaven. *Tianxia* in Chinese means "all under heaven," but since Chinese knowledge of the world was limited to China, it really meant the Chinese people. "Mighty is Shangdi, ruler of His people below," but when men depart from the virtuous ways, "[people] are afflicted in the Middle Kingdom (*Zhongguo*), to the far [land of] *Gui*" [25] (Zhengkun 2002, ii: 543, Waley 1960, 253). For the Chinese, Zhongguo was the centre of the universe and highest level of civilization. They expected that the rest of the world would follow the Chinese example.

The use of the term *Zhongguo* was not incidental either; it referred to China, which in the mind of the ancient Chinese, was located in the center of the universe, surrounded by other nations. North was the highest point, and the Son of Heaven always sat facing south to overlook his subjects. China expected "all under heaven" to come and pay homage, to learn and look for guidance from them. Shangdi bestowed them with the wisdom of the art of virtue to teach the "four corners" of the world. As the name implied, the inhabitants of the Middle Kingdom developed an air of superiority, self-centered and self-confident, and an attitude that "we know all." "I have heard of using Chinese tribes to change barbarians, but I have never heard of any being changed by barbarians" (Legge year 1975, 253).

Thus, the name Israel and that of China contained a uniqueness that directly described their attributes. Those attributes locked the People of the Book with the People Who Cherish the Written Word in a perpetual state that, irrespective of external factors, made them indestructible. As long as "Great Heaven … help[ed] only the virtuous" (Shujing 1967, 189), the Jews and the Chinese would survive the vicissitudes of history.

The Celestial Phenomenon

Wandering in the Sinai Desert, a desolate place devoid of natural resources, contributed to the development of the Jewish character. They received their spiritual guidance in the desert and learned how to defy extreme hardship. Elohim revealed Himself to Moses, committing the Israelites to an eternal life of obedience to the Torah that would guide them through the vicissitudes of

history and guarantee their survival. The Israelites, in return, pledged to worship Elohim and never to worship another god or deity. That was the beginning of monotheism, or the belief in one god.

From the inception of their religion, the Jews saw Elohim as a historical deity and rested their very existence in the Covenant. The Jews agreed to comply with the tenets of the Torah, and in return, Elohim guaranteed the survival of the Jews. In their compact form, the Ten Commandments committed the Jews to the absolute minimum of *mitzvoth*, good deeds, that they needed to observe. In their more elaborate form, they detailed the expected conduct of every single Israelite at any time and any place. Each Jew was required to read and study the Torah, and if language was a barrier, they were to employ interpreters of biblical texts called *sofrim*, scribes. This undivided belief in the existence of Elohim kept the Jews alive; it also shaped their character and tested their endurance.

Life in the rich, fertile lands of the Yellow River was a major factor in the development of the Chinese character. China became so attached to land that it became an obsession and later a liability. Land was the bloodline of the Chinese culture, and few Chinese could imagine a life without land. Land was the source of nutrition; without food, the empire could not survive. That was the logic in rural China, and the urban population was aware that their survival depended on the surrounding countryside. Thus China was in search of a social organization that would safeguard their rights to land.

Subsequently, a hierarchical government was established, wherein the land in the entire empire belonged to the Son of Heaven, and his presence represented continuity and stability. Continuity consisted of following the way of the ancient sages handed down through oral tradition. The way of the sages had the same weight in China as the words of Elohim in Judaism. Not that the belief in deity was neglected; it was rather relegated to the forces of nature. As nature displayed a pattern of predictability (i.e., changing seasons), so were the forces that affected the social stability of the Chinese.

> The idea that history not only could but necessarily had to repeat itself according to a pattern laid down from the very early beginning had barely been accepted when historiography became in a sense a branch of the investigation of the future. For an attempt was made to find a historical period to match every example provided by the theory and to document this correlation by the enumeration of certain

> phenomena. During the Han period [206 BCE–220 CE] a special "language" of the silent heaven was beginning to be discovered. It no longer tended to express itself in the language of the people and its right to revolution, but in the language of nature. History books were suddenly filled with reports about miraculous celestial or terrestrial phenomena, which were assigned a particular significance usually, meant that the ruler was being either encouraged or admonished. (Bauer 1976, 72)

The appearance of celestial phenomena meant one thing: the spirits were restless. They needed to be appeased, or the Middle Kingdom (Zhongguo), would face ferocious calamities. Violent thunderstorms and lightening followed by natural disasters on a grand scale meant the appearance of a furious Shangdi. It was an indication to humans that heaven was displeased with the performance of the Son of Heaven, and he was on the verge of losing the Mandate. Such beliefs instilled awe and fear into the people, much like the fear and awe that Elohim instilled into the Jews.

To maintain their relationships with heaven, both the Jews and the Chinese had to comply with the most basic tenets of all: they had to be part of the chosen. Only Abraham and the Son of Heaven were privileged enough to be chosen. If all Jewish males were circumcised on the eight day after birth (Gen. 17:10), or, if converted into the faith, then circumcised upon conversion, then He would in return make the descendants of Abraham His chosen people. And if the Son of Heaven was virtuous enough to be given the Mandate, then "Heaven … would send radiance to earth below to guard this Son of Heaven" (Waley 160, #142).

Both the Covenant and the Mandate were irrevocable, which indirectly tied the two cultures together by the invisible bonds of yin and yang. The Covenant was a formal treaty with Elohim and the Mandate with Shangdi.

The belief of being chosen was evident in both Jewish and Chinese thinking. Jewish historians thought "Israel—so far as we know—was the only society that based its relationship to its God on a formal treaty" (Ben-Sasson 1976, 181). Historians suspected that a similar treaty existed with another culture, but the whereabouts of that culture was a mystery. Rudimentary knowledge of Confucianism put China on the top of their list, though the connection was elusive.

But the evidence was there, buried in the Chinese annals. “The charge that Heaven gave was solemn, was forever” (Waley#215; Zhengkun 2002, II:600); only the current holder of the Mandate, the emperor, could lose it. To maintain that charge, the Son of Heaven was required to abide to the rule of pure virtue, and then his descendants would inherit the Mandate of heaven. “The people of our race were created by heaven … what they nourished most was pure virtue” (Waley #142; Zhengkun 2002, II:573).

Virtue was the code of conduct expected from the Son of Heaven, and through him, it transcended to the rest of China. Should the Son of Heaven deviate from that code, he would lose the Mandate. Only the purely virtuous was entitled to the Mandate: “The Mandate of Heaven … was the purity of King Wen’s [26] virtue! May his descendants hold fast to them” (Chan 1970, 6). In this sense, virtue was to the Chinese what the mitzvoth were to the Jews, and the Mandate of Heaven was tantamount to the Covenant. Without virtue, China could not have survived for as long as she did.

The Divine Protection

Both the Jews and the Chinese shared the belief that providence had established a presence with them and that they were under divine protection. In the case of the former, the entire Jewish community was under the umbrella of protection. Even when the Jews transgressed and severe punishment was meted out, the divine protection remained with them. “I have seen the affliction of my people … and heard their cries … I know their sufferings, and I have come down …” (Exod. 3:7). In China, the divine protection was confined to the Son of Heaven only, but through him to the rest of the people. When the Son of Heaven diverged from the virtuous ways, providence withdrew His protection, effectively terminating the Mandate but maintaining presence in tianxia (China)

The Shekhina

In exile, the Jews made sanctuary to Elohim "that I [Elohim] dwelt [*shakhan*] among them" (Exod. 25:8). The term used for sanctuary was *shekhina*, a Hebrew word grammatically feminine, which meant "to dwell" or "to live." The first dwelling place was established "in the tents of Shem" (Gen. 9:27). The Talmudic sages had difficulty determining the exact meaning of the term *shekhina,* though they all agreed that it referred to the divine presence and that it was another Hebrew term for Elohim. Consequently, Her dwelling place was not just among the Israelites as group but among individuals as well.

Belief in the sanctity and protection of the divine presence, or Shekhina, was so deeply rooted in Judaism that no event in history occurred without invoking the name of the almighty or His representative, and attributing the fortunes or misfortunes to His will. "Elohim, the creator of the universe, who governs it and cares for His creatures, is necessarily removed from the world, being above and beyond it; but in the same measure, the concept of the providence incorporates God's nearness" (Urbach 1987, 38). Since Elohim is physically far from us, how can we understand His ways? "'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways may ways,' says the Lord. For as heavens are higher than earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isa. 55: 8–9).

Grounded in the feeling of God's nearness was the belief that "He answers those who inquire of Him" (Schwarz 1956, 35). To accommodate the Shekhina, the Israelites built sanctuaries in several places such as Shechem and Beth-El and built the temple on the highest ground in Jerusalem. High ground offered a local focal point and a dwelling place for the providence. Flat and open space such as Shechem offered a place for the Levites to minister the ritual. Irrespective of location, the Shekhina was always present with the people.

So long as the Israelites were in bondage, the Shekhina was in bondage with them: "and they saw Elohei Israel" (Exod. 24:10). After redemption "in all these afflictions, He was afflicted" (Isa. 63:9), which meant "not an ambassador nor angel, but His presence saved them" (Urbach 1987, 136). His protection was portable and extended to the Israelites

wherever they went. The protection was extended to the people, not to the land.

This left the Jews exposed to the whim of the local rulers. Since they had an obligation to study the Torah even on foreign land, they had to abide by the local customs. Often Jews had to choose between observing the tenets of the Torah or the local laws. This contradiction caused the Jews to transgress, and consequently they were rewarded or punished as a community and not as individuals.

> That our people were being punished by way of chastening and not for their destruction. For indeed it is a mark of great kindness when the impious are not let alone for a long time, but punished at once. In case of other nations, the Sovereign Lord in his forbearance refrains from punishing them till they have filled their sins to the full, but in our cases, he had determined otherwise. (Urbach 1987, 526)

All Jews were brothers. Yet, even under the most trying circumstances, the Shekhina did not abandon her people. She comforted the Jews that, "until Eretz Israel was chosen, all lands were fit for Divine communications" (Urbach 1987, 705, note 61).

The Divine Presence

But was China also fit for the divine presence? According to ancient Chinese annals, not only was she fit, providence had also established her dwelling place in China: "The [patriarch] Great Yu gave the streams and hills their present form" (Waley1960, #200) and "fashioned the Mighty Mount Liang" (Waley 1960, #144).

Upon receiving the Mandate, patriarch Yao, one of the founding fathers of China, dispatched each of his four brothers to the four corners of the empire to demarcate the boundaries that were to be under His protection (Shujing 1967, 3–5). When they saw the vast expanse of land and that as yet "no houses had been built in the fertile plain of Zhou, [He said] 'Stop, build your house here'" (Waley 1960, #240). "And here He made his *ta*" [dwelling place] (Zhengkun 2002, II: 492).

The Chinese word *ta*, dwelling place, was used the same way as the biblical term of *shekhina*. According to the Chinese encyclopedic dictionary *Cihai*, the term *ta* in ancient China was "a dwelling place" where divination took place, and it was considered filled with spirits and therefore sacred.[27] In other words, ta in ancient China was identical to the Hebrew biblical term *mishkhan* (tabernacle), the camp of the Shekhina (Urbach 1987, 42). "Moses erected the mishkhan [tabernacle] and took the testimony and put it into the ark" (Exod. 40:19–20). The Shekhina went before Israel and prepared the place for them to dwell (Urbach 1987, 43). The tabernacle housed the Ark of the Covenant until King Solomon built the Temple.

The difference was that China had no ark; therefore neither tabernacle nor temple were deemed sacred in China. What was sacred was the place where the divine established its presence. Since the entire "land of Zhou" was chosen, China fell under the divine protection.

The choice of China for the divine protection is also interesting from a biblical point of view. China was a vast isolated place of abundance, of plenty, and of beauty in complete contrast to the biblical strip of land of "milk and honey." It was a land of yin to contrast with the yang.

> He could think of no place pleasanter than Han,
> very pleasant the land of Han.
> Its rivers and pools so large,
> its bream and tench so fat,
> its deer so plentiful and black bears
> and brown, wild cats and tigers.
> Without mishap, she reached this lovely dwelling place [ta]
> Hanji[28] rested and was at peace.
> (Zhengkun II: 579, Waley 1960, 147–148)

Scholars are divided as to the exact location of Han. The land of Han described in this song does not conform to the topography of the Han tribe that lived in southern China. According to Waley a prominent sinologist and translator,

> you will find that the Han in this song is in Hebei, near Beijing. There is, however, no real evidence that such a place existed. It had been invented by scholars who could not bear to think of the people of Yen

[29] coming across two provinces, when they helped to fortify the Han. (Waley 1960, 145)

Chinese scholars, on the other hand, point out that despite the historical inconsistencies, the importance of this ode rests in the fact that Hanji became the mythological female divinity whose spirit dwelt in China. She was the mother of the Han Chinese, and, akin to the Shekhina, Hanji was associated with peaceful coexistence. Everything under her protection was included, and anything outside that sphere was excluded.

The Shekhina and Hanji offered hope to their people that rested in the power of virtue. But there was a significant difference. In Judaism, the Shekhina dwelt permanently with the Israelites and meted out reward and punishment collectively. For a transgression that occurred in a small village in Europe, for instance, the entire Jewish community in the Diaspora would suffer. In China, the spirit of Hanji offered protection to the *land* and not to the *people*. Divine protection was limited temporarily to the Son of Heaven and lasted for only as long as he followed the way of virtue. “The sincerely virtuous among men becomes the great sovereign” (Shujing 1967, 113) “Heaven guided his mind, allowed his descendants to succeed him, and protected them. He acquainted himself with heaven, and was obedient to it” (Shujing 1967, 163).

For a transgression, the Son of Heaven would lose the Mandate, and he would no longer be under the divine protection. This theme was exploited by one of the sage kings of China, the Duke of Zhou (ca. 1122 BCE), who realistically concluded that following a pure, virtuous way was beyond human nature:

> I also dare not rest in the Mandate of Shangdi, forever … The Mandate of Heaven is not easily [preserved]. Heaven is hard to depend on. Those who have lost the Mandate did so because they could not practice and carry on the reverence and the brilliant virtue of their forefathers. (Chan 1970, 6; Shujing 1967, 183)

Losing the Mandate meant the transfer of the divine protection from the deposed Son of Heaven to his successor, but providence still maintained her presence in China, much the same way Elohim maintained His presence with the chosen people.

The departure of the divine protection caused three distinctive catastrophes in both cultures that we can see, in retrospect, acted in harmony with the principles of yin and yang. The exile of the Jews in 586 BCE caused their permanent dispersion, equal only to the brutal unification of China under the Qin (225–206 BCE). The expulsion from Spain in 1492 made the Jews realize that they were only guests in the Diaspora and that they needed to reclaim their own homeland. This catastrophe was equal to the Mongol conquest (1279–1368 CE) of China, which made the Chinese realize that they were exiles in their own land. Finally, the horrors of the Holocaust (1939–1945) were only matched in scope and intensity to the self-inflicted horrors of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1969).

Despite these catastrophes, the fundamental tenets of both cultures remained unchanged, nor did these events permanently alter the basic social structure. Embedded within Chinese and Jewish belief were the guardians of orthodoxy whose function was to safeguard the divine way.

The Traditionalists

The Sages

What was the common denominator between the Jewish sages and the Chinese literati? The origin of the Jewish sages can be traced back to the institution of the *cohanim* (priests) headed by high priest in biblical times, who was revered as “the supreme authority in Torah matters” (Urbach 1987, 524). But after the Israelites settled in Canaan during the time of Joshua, they instituted a unique governing system at the head of which were men learned in the laws of the Torah. They were considered divine men accountable to Elohim, and they ruled by summoning “the congregation of Israel” or “the people of Israel” (Dimont 1962, 48).

Canaan was divided into two autonomous territorial units each headed by a consortium of elders, the clan heads, who dispensed justice and made all decisions affecting the general welfare of the tribes” (Kaufmann 1955, II,

626). This type of government placed the family and the individual at the head of an economic unit and the government next. Its weakness lay in the loose formation of a governing body that lacked central control. Its authority was limited to matters regarding the Torah. Thus, when Saul established the monarchy in the eleventh century BCE, he and his successors did not claim royal blood or divine mandate. They had no lineage that could be attributed to "heavenly blood." As such, the Jewish monarchy was unique, democratic in nature—but not strong enough to protect Israel from the onslaught of Babylon.

When Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, conquered Jerusalem (546 BCE), he destroyed the Temple, the physical symbol of Judaism, but he could not break the spirit of the Jews:

> It is in truth a surprising fact that the Jewish people never gave up its laws, either under the rule of pagan kings or under the domination of Christians. In this respect it is different from other tribes or nations; no emperor or king who found them in this land was able to prevent the Jews from being differentiated, by their observance of the Law, from the rest of the family of nations. (Urbach 1987, 524)

Though the Jewish monarchy was dispensable, the Jewish spirit was indestructible. What saved the Jews were the commandments that required them to study the Torah even at the expense of freedom. It tied them to neither government nor monarchy; it only required them to set aside time for reading the Torah.

Even during the exile and the Diaspora, Jews continued to recite the Torah, and any hardship was regarded as merely external interference that only strengthened the internal resolve. Such events altered the relationship of the Jews to the outside world and radically changed the status of the Jews in alien lands but did not change their spirit. Even after two thousand years in the Diaspora, the Jews are more tied to the Torah than to their country. It is little wonder then that the longevity of the Jews is largely attributed to the persistence of their guardianship of the tradition.

The Literati

The guardians of Chinese orthodoxy were the ancient sages who, akin

to their Jewish counterparts, emphasized mental prowess over physical strength. Confucius (550–479 BCE) talked about education in general to everyone, with particular application to social relationships. The family constituted the core of the social system. That in order to govern a country, one had first to govern his family,[30] has been the axiom of the Confucian doctrine.

Ordinary people accepted this principle because they could apply it to everyday human concerns, and they insisted that government exists for the common welfare. The educated classes also revered this principle because it was based on advancement through merit and defined a code of behavior. The emperors supported Confucianism for its inherent conservatism combined with a reputation for benevolent governing system (McNeill 1970, 6).

At the head of this system was the Son of Heaven, who fulfilled the dual role of head of the government and high priest. His duty as high priest was to appease the spirits of the ancestors and to offer sacrifices to heaven. As the nominal head of government, he symbolized unity and continuity. He derived his powers from the belief that he was a descendant of heaven, and as such, he was the holder of the Mandate of Heaven.

But the Mandate was not permanent; it was conditioned on the virtuous conduct of the Son of Heaven. His conduct was closely scrutinized by the guardians of virtues, who were none other than the ancient sage philosophers, or as Mencius called them, the “acme of human relations” (Fung 1966, 7).

The teachings of these philosophers were rooted in what antedated heaven and were “not divorced from ordinary daily activities” (Fung 1966, 8). The goal of their teaching was to attain sagehood without abandoning society or negating life (Fung 1966, 6). The sages accomplished spiritual cultivation through the studying of the ancient canons, and they applied the acquired knowledge to function in society. The status of these sage philosophers, later known as literati, was clearly defined, and there was nothing equivalent to their position and influence in the West, save the rabbinic institution in Judaism.

Though the role of the sages and the literati may appear to be identical, a difference in substance existed between them. The Jewish sages took on the title of rabbi, which originally referred to those teachers of the

Torah who received their ordination (*semichut*) and was in use from the first century CE until the abolition of the Sanhedrin in the fifth century. The term *literati* was used to emphasize the literary qualification of the title holder.

As this definition suggests, the role of the rabbi was to teach the members of the community, to read and interpret the law, and to rule on matters concerning Jewish law. Rabbis were common people who attained great wisdom in the way of the Torah and "when a man finished, then does he but begin" (Glatzer 1969, 8). They became the principal interpreters of the *hallacha* (law) without enjoying special privileges or social status. They did not derive a salary from the rabbinic duties, nor did they enjoy special status, and in addition to serving as community resource people, they also had a vocation.

Every individual Jew, irrespective of wealth, social standing, or vocation (farmers, craftsmen, laborers, and intellectuals), was equal in the synagogue, and each of them was obliged to further their education as members of the society and as an equal right partner in the entire Jewish community. If the *am-haarez,* the common people, forgot the language of the ancients, or did not understand a certain passage of the Torah, they turned to the local rabbi.

The Chinese literati were learned in the way of the *Classics*, and they attained their status through passing an examination that certified their qualifications. As members of the literati, they were eligible to serve in an official capacity and become members of the highest levels of the social strata. They were leaders of the community and represented state authority. They derived an income from the central government, and the only qualification for a bureaucratic assignment was their literary knowledge.

In order to become literati, one needed education. In theory, education was open to all and attainable by all who so desired. In reality, it was the privilege of the few. The literati fiercely safeguarded this privilege, and "generally conferred official rank only upon people who had such proof of educational standing" (Chang 1967, 3). Learning benefited the literati, and they were disinclined to share their fortune with the lower classes. Despite the privileges and honors of an official title, many literati declined government positions to devote time to the study of the Classics, "to enable a man, *as a man*, to be a man, not some particular kind of man" (Fung 1966, 11). That was the highest honor of a literati, much like the highest honor for a Jew was to be called a *mentsh*.[31]

The Mishna

Both the rabbis and the Chinese literati were guardians of orthodoxy. The rabbis were overly preoccupied with the minute details of the scriptures, and they adhered to the axiom that the scriptures were canonized and therefore unalterable. The literati were overly preoccupied with ceremonies and historical precedents, and they felt that since the Classics were not canonized, the collection was open to addendums.

The most important difference was the adaptation of the canons to daily life, which required explanations and interpretations. Since those interpretations were transmitted orally, each generation of followers and disciples recorded these comments to preserve them for posterity. Out of these records emerged the growth of the Jewish Oral Law (Talmud) and the interpretations of the Chinese Classics.

The origin of the Oral Law can be traced to the time of Ezra, who in 455 BCE assembled the people of Israel and canonized the Torah. But canonization created its own set of problems. As long as the Jews were in their own land, the precepts of the Torah were adequate, but when in exile in strange lands, those laws appeared inapplicable.

Ezra foresaw such a situation, and along with the canonization, he created an institution called the Great Assembly or *Kenesseth Hagdola*, with the purpose of amending and interpreting the Mosaic laws. For over a century, the sages labored to formulate a new set of laws to guide the Jews living in the Diaspora. They created a vast amount of literature, the purpose of which was to explain the biblical text from the ethical and devotional point of view. Thus, the seeds of the *midrash*, investigation, were sown.

With the growing influence of Hellenism in the fourth century BCE, interpreters infused reasoning, or *logos*, into the Torah, which evolved into the *Mishna* or repetition. The Mishna was an accumulation of four centuries of Jewish religious and cultural activities and constituted the framework for the larger work, the Talmud. It provided guidance on a variety of issues relevant to the Jews in the Diaspora, and it is divided into six parts known as *sedarim* (orders): 1. agricultural rules; 2. laws governing appointed seasons (Sabbath and festivals); 3. laws on the transfer of women and property along

with women from one man (father) to another man (husband); 4. the system of civil and criminal law; 5. laws for the conduct of the cult in the Temple; and 6. laws on the preservation of cultic purity in the Temple (Neusner 1988, xv).

The Mishna was so important in Judaism that it became second only to the Hebrew Torah. Jews all over the Diaspora consulted the words of the Mishna and adapted them to the local conditions, thus forming the basis of the Talmud. Equal in importance and influence to the Mishna in China was the Analects of Confucius.

The Analects of Confucius

The Analects of Confucius encompasses all the sayings of Confucius, and it emanates from oral tradition. Its seeds can be traced to the *Liuyi* (six arts), the records of which had been lost save for two books that had been incorporated in the Classics. Our knowledge of Liuyi came from Xunzi (298–238 BCE), one of the most influential interpreters of Confucianism.

Xunzi was an administrator who developed a pragmatic view of human nature and regarded traditional rituals as a means to social control. He often found himself trying to explain the meanings behind the Confucian sayings and explained that the origin of the Liuyi rested with human nature:

> Man by birth has desire. If [his] desire is not satisfied, then he will seek satisfaction. If [his] search for satisfaction is without limits and purpose, then [he] will be combative. Combativeness leads to chaos … The former kings hated chaos, and they established li [propriety, code of conduct] and separated it from yi [righteous].[32] (Xunzi 1974, 2:348)

Out of a desire for social order, the Liuyi (six arts of conduct) was born.

The Liuyi comprised six books (*shu*):

- The Book of Changes (Yijing), a book of divination and the source of Chinese orthodoxy
- The Book of Songs (Shijing), a book expressing the feeling of the common people, including poetry, ballads, folklore, etc. It is akin in content and style to the Psalms.

- The Book of History (Shujing) records the formative years of ancient China. It is akin to the biblical history accounts contained in the books of Judges and Kings. Though this work was not preserved in its original form, due to the book burning in 221 BCE, it was reproduced from memory and rewritten during the second century CE. Most scholars doubt its accuracy.
- The Book of Rites (Liji) records the ceremonies and rituals from the earliest times, and its contents encompass similar topics to the books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. It is the Chinese Torah.
- Another book, the Book of Music (Yue), is no longer preserved. Its known chapters have been incorporated into the Book of Rites.
- The Spring and Autumn Annals (Qunqiu) is a historical account of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (770–481 BCE) that is equivalent to the biblical account in the Chronicles.

Taken together, these canons served the same purpose as the Old Testament and constituted the cultural legacy of China. Confucius quoted extensively from these works, but it was his disciples who compiled and recorded his sayings in the *Lunyu* or Analects, which in its original form, dates back to the fourth century BCE. Only a collection of twenty "books" (chapters) had been preserved.

Contrary to popular belief, Confucius did not write or edit the Analects. There is no logical order to the arrangement of the chapters and no single topic dominates the content of the Analects. Each sentence provides information or directives on what is proper or improper, but it does not provide context:

.

> The first impression one gets [from reading the Analects] is perhaps briefness and disconnectedness of the sayings and writings of their authors …. Each paragraph consists of only a few words, and there is hardly any connections between one paragraph and the next. (Fung 1966, 11)

Nevertheless, if we were to rearrange the text of the Analects, we could divide them into the following six topics: knowledge (*zhi*), human relations

(*ren*), the superior man (*junzi*), filial piety (*xiao*), rituals (*li*), and music (*yue*). It is the Jewish Mishna.

Is there any connection between the Mishna and the Analects? On a superficial level, any relationship between the two would seem coincidental and inconsequential. Each addresses six topics relevant only to their own cultures, and each covers the entire range of human relations. They also make statements as to what people should and should not do and how people should conduct themselves in certain situations.

> The Mishna clearly addresses Israel, the Jewish people; it is remarkably indifferent to the Hebrew Scriptures. The Mishna does not attribute its saying to biblical heroes, prophets, or holy men; it does not claim to emerge from a fresh encounter with God through revelation, the Holy Spirit is not alleged to speak here. (Neusner 1988, xiii–xiv)

The Analects clearly address the Chinese people, and it claims no originality. Confucius claimed that he was a transmitter of ideas and not an originator. The Analects apply to the Chinese people in particular. Furthermore, "Confucius was neither the author nor the commentator, or even the editor of any of the classics. He was a conservative who upheld tradition" (Fung 1966, 39). And here lie the hidden connections: the Mishna came to the rescue when the Jews were on the verge of vanishing. It provided the tools needed to survive in the Diaspora. Its six divisions conformed to the needs of the people in exile. It was flexible enough to accommodate any circumstances, yet it was rigid enough to assure that the basic tenets of the Torah were observed everywhere Jews lived.

The sages formulated and transmitted the Mishna orally as part of a package of the "whole Torah of Moses" (Neusner 1988, xiv), so it bore the status of divine revelation right alongside the Torah. It became the principal book of Judaism and the foundation of the commentaries that later became known as Talmud. Without the Torah, there would be no Judaism, and without the Mishna and the Talmud, Judaism might not have survived.

The Analects served a similar purpose: it came to the rescue when China was on the verge of disintegration. Non-Chinese tribes posed a real threat to the Han Chinese in antiquity. Constant wars during the Warring States period (475–221 BCE) made the emperor a figurehead. China was on

the verge of political and moral collapse. During this period of political upheaval, different and diverse schools of thought vied for followers.

At this critical time, the literati revived the humanism of Confucius, a philosophy that answered the needs of the people scattered among competing tribes. They rejected the warfare of the legalists, they rejected the theoretical arguments of the school of names, and they rejected the natural revelations of the yin/yang school or the nonactive ways of the Daoists. Instead, the literati insisted that the ancient rule of virtue be revived and strictly observed. This guaranteed that in the event of a conquest, the barbarian rulers would have to abide by the Confucian code of conduct.

The Analects became the principal book of Chinese orthodoxy and the foundation of the Chinese society. Without Confucius, there would be no China as we know it today, and without the Analects and its subsequent appendices, China might not have survived.

Chapter 4: Challenges to the Jews and to China

A Cultural Journey

By agreeing to abide by terms of the Covenant and the Mandate of Heaven, the Jews and China accepted a destiny that took them on a cultural journey unparalleled in history. The Jews operated within the comfort zone of the Covenant, and irrespective of transgressions, they could always *return* to Elohim; even if one transgressed all his life and only repented on the day of his death, all his injuries were pardoned (Twersky 1972, 80).

Repentance was unique. Jews could be forced to denounce their faith, could be forced to convert, but "if you return, O Israel, to Me shall you return" (Jer. 4:1). Repentance (*teshuvah*) brought near those who were far away, and since the Covenant was solemnized on Mount Sinai with all the Jews and with each Jew, the entire Jewish population became a community of one, one for all and all for one. This created a community that was interdependent, not only because the act of one affected the fate of all, but because each needed the other.

China likewise operated within the comfort zone of the Mandate, but the difference was that the Mandate applied to the Son of Heaven only, and through him to the rest of the people. In other words, all men were brothers except for the holder of the Mandate, who was the fatherly figure.

In times of outside threat, China became an interdependent on the social structure where communities supported each other, but they did not necessarily support the holder of the mandate. If the emperor lost the virtuous ways of the ancient sages, he could not repent; he could not maintain the Mandate, which was not permanent. In times of internal disunity and chaos, China found shelter in return (*fugu*) to the writing of the ancient sages, a state that must be attained by a symbolic return rather than by progress.

The prominent Tang poet Li Bo (701–762 CE) put it, "Our sage dynasty has returned to primal antiquity … to honor the pure" (Owen 1975, 2). Fugu (return) had come to the fore at such times of turmoil when the

coexistence of culture and reality were fundamental to the survival of China. Akin to teshuvah (repentance), fugu (return) was unique; it safeguarded the Chinese code of conduct at the expense of progress.

The cultural journey of the Jews and the Chinese was continuous and acrimonious, but both weathered the obstacles to survive and to outlast other civilizations. Until modern times, three major challenges compelled the Jews and the Chinese to undergo profound transformations.

The Jews encountered their first challenge when the Temple was destroyed in 587 BCE. It was followed by exile and permanent dispersion. China's first challenge occurred during her formative years, which started with a long period of disunity that lasted from approximately 770 to 221 BCE. During this time, China experienced an unprecedented level of intellectual activity that suddenly ended with a brutal unification in 221 BCE. In this period, China reflected Jewish history in reverse.

The second challenge to the Jews was the rise of Christianity (first to fourth century CE), which directly challenged Judaism as a viable religion. The Jews countered with a burst of intellectual and spiritual creativity that united and solidified the Jews in the Diaspora. The second challenge to the Chinese was the ideological battle between Confucianism and legalism. The sharp difference between the rule of the law and the rule of virtue forced China to choose one over the other, and the outcome of this struggle determined the course of Chinese history.

The third challenge to the Jews was the rise of Islam in the seventh century CE and the silent cultural inroads that compelled the Jews to reassess their faith as it shifted from a universal religion to a nationalistic one. Islam almost converted the Jews without forcing them to do so; it was akin to the third challenge in China, in which Buddhism quietly undermined the very foundation of the Confucian society and forced China to re-evaluate her heritage. This influence of Bhuddism went undetected for almost four centuries (first through fourth century CE) and reached such a point that it almost annihilated China's heritage.

Exile and Disunity

Long unity causes disunity; long disunity causes unity. (Lo 1962, ch.1)

Shortly after the Jewish monarchy was established (ca.1000 BCE), Israel was surrounded by powerful empires that overpowered her, ultimately leading the Jews into exile (586 BCE). By all accounts, the future of Judaism was bleak; it was almost on par with other conquered civilization that perished during captivity. But in contrast to the great empires, the Jews weathered captivity and exile to survive, outlasting the greatest and most powerful empires.

What was the reason for their survival, and how did they prevail? Part of the reason for their survival can be attributed to the visionary aspect of the prophets and to the fact that the Jews adapted the scriptures to accommodate the circumstances of their surroundings.

After exile, the Jews were scattered all over the world and were forced to live side-by-side with people of other creeds, customs, and needs. Though the scriptures foretold such events, they did not offer the Jews a contingency plan for survival. It was left to the people and the sages to derive the correct meaning. The sages found one particular biblical passage quite instructive:

> You shall not let your cattle gender with a diverse kind; you shall not sow your field with two different kinds of seeds; nor shall there come upon you a garment of cloth made of two kinds of stuff mingled together. (Lev. 19:19)

From this passage, the Jews inferred that they should adjust to the conditions of where they lived but keep their faith intact.

When the Jews were carried away to Babylon (597 BCE), at first they regarded their captivity as temporary. They expected the young king of Babylon to be defeated and the exiles to return the treasures of the temple and come back to Judea. They saw no need to abandon their social structure of family units (*batei avot*) headed by elders (Jer. 29:1 and Ezek. 8:1 and 20:3). The destruction of the Temple and their captivity was regarded as divine punishment for their sins; it was the manifestation of divine wrath (Ben-Sasson 1976, 163).

Once the “period of affliction” was completed, and Elohim’s wrath calmed, the exiles expected to return. But the majority of the Jews did not return, and in this respect, the exile was the event that changed the course of

Jewish history and Judaism as a religion. Jewish history was no longer played out in their country; they did not have one. Instead, their history was to be a record of the cumulative experiences of the entire community in the Diaspora.

The Jews also underwent significant spiritual and religious changes. They devoted time to repent their sins, and since they could not sacrifice (Temple ritual), the prophets preached that

> rituals and cult in themselves were of no value to God. Humanity, justice and morality were superior to any cult. God did not want rituals; he wanted higher moral standards from men. God abhorred sacrifice, therefore it was no sin if one did not offer sacrifices to God. The real sin, they held, was corruption and perversion of justice. (Dimont 1962, 64)

Meanwhile, the Chinese experienced something that the Jews had to wait two millennia to start to appreciate. While the Jews enjoyed a brief period of unity under monarchy, the Chinese experienced a long period of disunity during the Zhou Dynasty (1027–221 BCE). The Zhou dynasty was divided into two periods: the Western Zhou, from 1027 to 770 BCE, and the Eastern Zhou, from 770 to 221 BCE.

Chinese historians divided the Eastern Zhou into the Spring and Autumn (771–476 BCE) and the Warring States periods (476–221 BCE). The former was characterized by a long period of political consolidation through conquest and alliances, and the second by a long period of war. This period differed from the challenges of Western empires in one respect: Western empires rose and fell, and with them their culture and people vanished; the Chinese kingdoms fought each other, built, and destroyed each other, but ultimately, the people and their core beliefs did not change.

During the Spring and Autumn period, China comprised more than 140 small kingdoms that “were consumed by the ever more tortured quest to survive, and major conflicts were waged to avenge insults, expand territory, or greedily acquire riches” (Sawyer 1996, 6). Only the ideal of the Mandate of Heaven kept China from disintegrating.

After the fall of the Eastern Zhou Dynasty in 770 BCE, (under the pressure of constant barbarian invasions, the capital had to be moved to Loyang) the power structure in China shifted from a centralized authority to

the local fiefs. The emperor, to preserve his claim to the Mandate of Heaven, bestowed land upon the feudal lords (mostly his kin) in exchange for a sort of nonaggression pact. The feudal lords in turn allotted lands to their vassals in exchange for their loyalty. Thus, a feudal hierarchy was headed by an emperor whose most important function was limited to offering sacrifice to the Shangdi (God on High). From a historical perspective, the Chinese emperor fulfilled the same role as the high priest (*Cohen Hagadol*) of Israel during the First Temple Period (960–580 BCE).

Christianity and the One Hundred Schools of Thought

Christianity Challenges Judaism

Even the high moral standards practiced by the Jews and the Chinese clashed with the realities of the times. Other creeds had their gods too, but the gods were impersonalized in images, icons, and statues that were prohibited in Judaism and in China. The Jews and the Chinese each worshipped an invisible deity that could not be materialized in any form or shape. Inevitably, this led to a clash between monotheism and polytheism.

For Judaism, this clash started with Emperor Antiochus, who issued a decree in 167 BCE forbidding two of the most sacred religious practices in Judaism: circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath. Neither of these practices—the absolute minimum for Jews—contradicted national or regional interests, and unless the decrees were overturned, Judaism was on a collision course with other religions. The Jews were determined to fight for their rights. Even slavery and exile were preferable to the abrogation of these rights. For the next two hundred years, constant commotions hardened the resolve of both sides, culminating in first anti-Jewish decrees of Emperor Constantine the Great (280–337 CE), who converted to Christianity.

With Emperor Constantine’s conversion, the Roman Empire became Christian. “Great multitudes flocked to the religion of Christ,” wrote Eusebius (d. 371), Bishop of Vercellae, the first member of the Western church to adopt a monastic way of life for himself and for his monks.

Emperor Constantine forbade the Jews to own slaves, and all slaves

owned by Jews were freed—a severe blow, under the economic conditions of the time. Likewise, any slave who converted to Judaism was punished by death. Constantine also prevented the meeting of the rabbis to proclaim the new moon and leap years, thus preventing the Jews in the Diaspora from setting the calendar for the holidays.

More inflammatory, however, was the language that described the Jews as "pernicious" or a "despicable sect" that used to meet in "sacrilegious assemblies" (Ben-Sasson 1976, 350). To preserve the purity of the races, Emperor Constantine forbade marriage between Christians and Jews, a decree that was wholeheartedly defended by Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea (260–340 CE), who wrote that "from now on Jews will not impure Christian women" (Larned 1922, 3:1761). This signaled the beginning of the desecration of the races.

After the conversion of Emperor Constantine in 324 CE, the missionary zeal of the faithful unleashed one of the most vicious attacks on the Jews. During past periods of repression, the Jews had mustered forces to revolt against the persecutors. The Maccabean (163–140 BCE) and the Bar Kochva (70–133 CE) revolts gained them brief respite, those were temporary victories. Each insurgency had ended in even more repressive and restrictive laws. Now, under the new decrees, the Jews were subjected to harsh, discriminatory laws that aimed to show their inferiority to the Christians. The Old Testament was discredited and substituted with the New Testament (canonized in 395 CE). The Jews were relegated to second-class citizens whose subsistence was at the whim of each local ruler.

In addition, the Jews also suffered from a lack of leadership. The Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the Jews, was unable to effectively cope with the new challenges. At the beginning of the emergence of Christianity, the Jews ignored the Christian threat. Then they tried to remedy the situation by inserting a paragraph into the Amida daily prayers asking for the return of Jerusalem. To expose the heretics in public, they also inserted the Nineteenth Benediction, *birkat haminim*, (benediction against the heretics), which, in its earliest Palestinian form, was directed primarily against the Judeo-Christians, who "shall have no hope" in their belief that the messiah had already appeared on earth" (Ben-Sasson 1976, 325).

These adjustments did not address the real issues of the times, and by ignoring the core differences between Christianity and Judaism,

> the people, as well as the state of the Jews, would have fallen into utter dissolution, or, at least, verged rapidly towards total extermination … .Yet still this inexhaustible race revived before long to offer new candidates for its inalienable inheritance of detestation and misery

wrote H.H. Milman in his monumental work *History of the Jews* (Larned 1922, vi:4893). “The Romans were bitter that the Jews did not surrender,” wrote the Roman historian Tacitus (55–120 CE) (Dubnov 1956, 179).

Judaism was relegated to the status of an obsolete religion. The Church delivered one of the most damaging blows to Judaism by proclaiming that the long-awaited messiah had come in the person of Jesus. But the Jews believed that once the messiah arrived, he would gather all Israel to revive the spiritual regenerations of humanity, then he would rule in peace and justice with a pure heart: “on that day the Lord shall be One and his name One” (Zech. 14:19).

In the ascendancy of Christianity, Jews were not only discredited and ridiculed for their strange customs, now they were persecuted as worshippers of a heretical religion. Under enormous social, political, and economic pressures, the Jews began doubting their existence as the chosen people. Should they stay the course or, perhaps, chart a new one? Many Jews wondered whether Elohim had abandoned them, and whether perhaps it was time to leave the universality of the religion and turn to a more individualistic faith.

The clash between universalism and individualism started to build momentum. It afflicted not only the Jews in Judea and in the Roman Empire but also the Jews in Babylon and throughout the Diaspora. There were the rebellious Jews, such as the Zealots who actively resisted the pressures and revolted. Then there were Jews who passively opposed the new doctrines, and they were in majority. But neither approach had any chance of success. The Jews realized that salvation came only with the messiah, the messenger of Elohim; he was the only one who could deliver the miracles and save his people.

Some preached that it was time to follow a different road, because the kingdom of God was about to come. Then the messiah would come, followed by his messengers. These thoughts emanated from the canonized scriptures, but the Christians succeeded in casting new doubts regarding the validity of the Old Testament. If Jesus was the messiah, then the new scriptures were the

valid ones.

The Christians' success at spreading the gospel was so quick and widespread that in a short period the New Testament went through three rather significant phases. The first phase (30–100 CE) included the preparation and individual seclusion, where the disciples of Jesus formed a group to become a sect within the Jewish nation. The differences between Christians and Jews were treated as family disputes. The second phase (100–250 CE) was that of revelation and spiritual separation from universal Judaism. At this stage, Christians reorganized and rendered liable to persecution anyone who was accused of treason and impiety, and anyone who belonged to illegal associations. The new teaching was no longer confined to Judea; it was carried to Rome and throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. The third phase (250–330 CE) was the abolition of the old faith (Judaism) and acceptance of the new faith. Philosophical thoughts started to emerge from the new religion (Dubnov 1956, 159). Judaism was under siege. Its adherents were persecuted and gradually deprived of their livelihood to became outcasts in their own birthplaces.

Accepting a new teaching was not an option for the Jews. The Torah was the law and a divine commandment. The only option was to determine to what extent to implement the tenets of the Torah, to adopt a stricter or more lenient interpretation. The school of Beth Hillel represented a more lenient, humanistic approach to the tenets of the Torah, while the school of Beth Shammai adhered to the strict legal interpretation. During the first century BCE, these two schools debated issues passionately, and their only success was to polarize Judaism. They engaged in hairsplitting arguments about the *hallacha*—a path wherein Israel walks—culminating in a schism that converted the Oral Law (Talmud) into an addendum to the Torah.

Hillel the Elder (ca. 75 BCE–5 CE) was a descendent of the House of David and came to the center of Jewish learning in Israel from Babylon. He displayed attributes of humility, patience, love of his fellows, and peaceability. He felt that man is obliged to make endeavors, for "if I am not for myself, who is for me?" But he cannot achieve much through seclusion and separation: "Do not seclude from the community" because "when I am for myself, what am I?" He felt that time is limited and famously asked "If not now, when?" (Neusner 1988, 674; Avot 1:14)

Hillel's impact on Judaism was as far-reaching as that of Confucius in China; he sided with the human aspect of relationships and always weighed

issues in the light of the human circumstances. A proselyte came to Hillel and asked him, “If I convert, could you teach me the entire Torah while I am standing on one leg?” Hillel replied, “What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow” (Urbach 1987, 589), a sentence that summarized the core of Judaism. His aim was to develop the Oral Law (Talmud) as a free-flowing inspiration that took into consideration the daily lives of people under various cultures.

Shammai, a contemporary of Hillel, was strict, pedantic, and easily angered. “Make the learning of Torah a fixed obligation. Say little and do much, and receive all men with a cheerful countenance” (Her and Shrira 1937, 103; Abot 1:15). He insisted on the scrupulous observances of the commandments without considering the consequences. A disciple of the House of Shammai summarized the attitude of Shammai towards the hallacha: “Let the world rests on three things—on truth, on justice, and on peace” (*ibid*).

Shammai gave very little consideration to external circumstances. It is said that he refused to feed his son on Yom Kippur, even when the sages ruled against him. He forbade sending out mail on Wednesday, so that it should not arrive on Saturday. A non-Jew should be working for a Jew on Saturday (Her and Shrira 1937, 104).

But the schism between the two schools culminated in a case when a wife asked for a divorce. Shammai refused to grant a divorce because there was not a clear case of adultery. He based his decision of one of the tenets of the Torah, which stated that

> When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, and if she goes and becomes another man’s wife, and the latter husband dislikes her and writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hands and sends her out of his house … then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the Lord. (Deut. 24:1–4)

Hillel looked at the case from the human perspective: he took into consideration the happiness and the possible peaceful coexistence of the

couple. If they lived together because the marriage contract forced them into such a union, then the husband was permitted to divorce her, even if he was unhappy with her for unrelated reasons (Her and Shrira 1937, 107).

One Hundred Schools of Thought Challenge China

While the Jews were fighting for freedom of belief, China was fighting for survival**.** Feudal lords were engaged in wars and political maneuverings, and had little time for ideological debates. Theoretical debates were left to the philosophers, while warlords conducted affairs of state. Yet the outcome of those debates, rather than wars, was what shaped the course of China, and those debates shaped China in a similar manner to that in which the Mishna shaped Judaism.

Scholars and the literati were engaged in fierce arguments about the future of China. What was the best course to follow? Was it the humanism of Confucianism, the strict laws of the legalism, or perhaps the "government by nonaction" of the Daoists? This gave rise to what the author of the History of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) called the "hundred schools of thought that contended for attention"[33]

Confucius (551–479 BCE), the first to openly oppose the feudal system, advocated a "return to antiquity," to the times when rulers ruled in accordance with the virtuous ways of the sage kings. His greatest achievement was in establishing a body of thought and learning by means of which scholars, or, as they were called, "gentlemen" (*junzi*), acquired knowledge through the study of the ancient writing of the Book of Rites. He was for China the amalgamation of Moses and the Torah.

Other schools of thought also vied for followers, and at one time, it seemed that there were hundreds of such schools, but only the following six had meaningful impact on China's future.

Chinese Term	**English Term**	**Philosophy**

Daoists	Naturalists	nonactivity, follow the way of nature
Yin/Yang	Cosmologists	astronomers, divide time and seasons
Rujia	Confucians	study of the ancient records
Mohist	Pacifists	guardian of the temple, frugal
Mingjia	Dialectics	sophists, theorists
Fajia	Legalists	codify the laws

The Daoists, or naturalist school, observed the changes in nature and based their philosophy on seasonal cycles. Nature was nonactive, yet it was omnipotent, which, according to the Daoists, should also be the way of the ruler. The ruler, by the sheer presence of being nonactive, creates the energy necessary to cause the subordinates to act.

The Yin/Yang school, or the cosmologists, were the ancient astronomers and talked about the divisions of times and seasons.

The Rujia, or the Confucians, adhered to the study of the ancient records and regarded scholars as the highest echelon of society.

The Mohists, or the pacifists, rose from being the guardians of the temples and therefore emphasized frugality.

The Mingjia (School of Names), or the dialectics, represented the argumentative school and tried to make a clear distinction between “names” and “actualities.” Famous among their argument was the conclusion that a white horse is not a horse because white is not a color.

The Fajia, legalists, maintained that good government must have its roots in fixed laws and not moral authority. Though the term *fajia* was mentioned for the first time in the Shiji (Book of History, ch.130 pg. 1112) in around 90 BCE, China had already practiced legalist doctrines since the seventh century BCE, reaching their zenith in the fourth centuries BCE.

The differences among the various schools of thought inevitably caused sharp ideological debates, but the one that impacted China the most was between the humanism of Confucius and the legalists.

During the Spring and Autumn period (771–476 BCE), over 140 small kingdoms fought each other for hegemony, and the moral approach to

solve social and political problems failed as larger and more powerful feudal lords continued to annihilate weaker states. The legalists gained ground and instituted reforms that, according to them, applied equally to all levels of the society, including the emperor. But in reality, those reforms were limited to three components: law (*fa*), power (*shi*), and statecraft/methods, (*shu*), which elevated the ruler above the law and reduced the people to subservient roles.

People were tools in the hands of rulers. Han Feizi, the synthesizer of the legalist school of thought, maintained that

> Moral conduct and good reputation that are not beneficial to the government should be discarded. The way of the enlightened ruler is to unify all laws but not to seek for wise men and firmly adhere to the statecraft [shu] but not to admire faithful persons. Scholars praise ancient kings and preach humanity and righteousness … but in their deeds, they struggle for eminence, but there is nothing in them that is suitable for accomplishment … Therefore, in a state of the enlightened ruler, there is no literature of books and records, but the laws serve as teaching. There are no sayings of ancient kings, but the officials act as teachers. Consequently, among the people within the borders of the state, whoever talks must follow the law, whoever acts must aim at accomplishment, and whoever shows courage musts do so entirely in the army. (Chan 1970, 259–260; Han Feizi, ch. 49)

Thus Li Guan (d. ca. 645 BCE), chief minister of Wei, enriched the state and strengthened the military. Shen Dao (ca. 350–275 BCE) was blinded by the idea of law and lacked awareness of worthy human capabilities. Shangyang (d. 338 BCE) ordered the people to be organized in groups of five and ten, mutually to control one another and to share in one another's punishment (Hsiao 1979, 368–372). These leaders introduced far-reaching reforms, but their success was rather limited. The people distrusted the laws, as they were perceived to be too rigid, biased, and favoring the ruling classes. Laws were enacted to benefit the ruler and not the people.

Han Feizi (d. 233 BCE) gave an example that became the epitome of legalism:

> A fellow in the state of Zheng wanted to buy a pair of shoes. First, he took measurements of his feet and then went to the market. At the

> store, he chose a pair of shoes, but then he remembered that he forgot the measurements on the chair at home, so he refused to make the purchase and returned for the measurements. But when he returned, the shoes were already gone. So when people asked him why he did not try the shoes on his feet, he replied: "I rather trust the measurements than my feet." (Han Feizi, ch. 49)

The legalists made it clear that the people had to adjust to the laws and not the laws to the people.

Inflexibility like this contributed to the people's dissatisfaction with the law. In legalist states, the farmers and the lower classes were subject to the harsh application of the laws, while officials and the feudal lords took advantage of their legislative powers to create enough amendments to exclude themselves. The strict application fell on the common people, many of whom became disenchanted and sought a livelihood by migrating from state to state. Often feudal lords offered them employment in exchange for labor. Though this arrangement seemed convenient, the migrants were usually allotted the least productive piece of land, which could hardly sustain an individual, let alone a family.

The laws did not bring the yearned-for peace, and the cycle of violence continued to contribute to what Lo Guanzhong, the author of the classic novel *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, observed: "When it comes to the affairs of the empire, long unity causes disunity, and long disunity causes unity" (Lo 1962, ch.1).

The legacies of the discourses between the Confucians and the legalists and between Hillel and Shammai serve as testimony to the resilience of each school of thought. For China, the question was what school of thought to adopt, and for the Jews, the question was how to adapt the law to the diverse circumstances in the Diaspora. China sided with the humanists, and the Jews remained divided.

During national emergencies, these debates intensified. When Judaism was on the verge of extinction and China was on the verge annihilation, the debate over the best course of action was mirrored in the attitudes of the two schools of thought. Had the legalists succeeded in their relentless pursue of the law, China would have ended like any other ancient empire, a memory in history. Had the Jews departed from the letter of the

law, Judaism might have vanished.

Yet, the role of the legalist in China must not be minimized. Legalism in China contributed to the rise and preservation of the dynasties and provided stable governments during times of extreme volatility. The legalists instituted far-reaching political, economic, and social reforms that impacted the country throughout history. Their greatest achievement, however, was the formation of the Chinese nation. Until unification in 221 BCE, China was not a country but an alliance of small kingdoms, not unlike Germany until the nineteenth century. But the demise of the legalists stemmed from their rigidity, their uncompromising attitude toward man-made laws.

This attitude towards the law captures the contrast between China and the Jews. The everlasting cycle of hope and despair that "long periods of good government are followed by turmoil, and long periods of turmoil are followed by good government" (Li 2000, 1–2) kept China from disintegrating. The threat to the enduring Chinese culture came from the legalists, who saw the law as the ultimate goal of control. By emphasizing strict adherence to the letter of the law and supporting military conquests, the legalists almost brought China to extinction. In order for China to survive, she had to reject the rigid legal system.

A similar cycle of hope and gloom kept the Jews from annihilation. The Torah provided hope, and in the absence of hope, Judaism could not have survived. The threat to the Jews came from a new teaching that sought to replace the Torah. By avoiding a direct confrontation with the new religion, instead engaging in hairsplitting debates about the meaning of the law, Judaism came under siege. The Jews had to defend the laws of the Torah to survive.

The Emerging Saviors

Rabban Johanan Ben Zakkai

To the rescue of the Jews came a visionary who had a modest plan with far-reaching consequences. Rabban Johanan Ben Zakkai (ca. 30–85 CE)[34], a

leading intellectual who abided by the biblical prophecy of "not by your sword" (Josh. 24:12), devised a plan to save Judaism. During the siege of Jerusalem in 68 CE, he approached Vespasian, the governor of Judea, with a prophecy that he, Vespasian, would become the next Roman emperor. And, indeed, when the prophesy materialized, Vespasian returned the favor by granting Ben Zakkai his modest request: to allow the Jews to set up a small academy in Jabneh (today's Lod) "to perform the commandments and teach Torah" (Her and Shrira1937, 120–126).

Ben Zakkai did more than that. He began to rebuild Jewish life to fill the void created by the destruction of the Temple. He reconvened the High Court (Sanhedrin) and set the dates for the new moon and the leap years from Jabneh. This information was transmitted by the means of beacons to other communities in the Diaspora. Thus Jews all over the world could simultaneously determine the beginning of the holidays.

Ben Zakkai's small academy (*yeshiva*) at Jabneh became the focal point of Jewish learning and the center of proliferation of synagogues. The synagogue served a dual purpose as a place to congregate for prayers and a schoolhouse for the Jewish people. The wealthy and influential leaders of the community were charged with administering and financing the schools. For more advanced studies, there was the *beth ha-midrash*, or the communal house of study. They were equivalent to the colleges and universities, and the course of study included the study of the Torah and commentaries.

The *beth ha-midrash* provided practical solutions to local issues and adjusted the Jewish laws to conform to the local civil laws. Local laws superseded Jewish laws with the exception of circumcision and the dietary laws. Since these two provisions did not impose on any civil laws, they became the cornerstone of Judaism.

But Ben Zakkai and his successors foresaw the calamities that were to befall the Jews: their loss of freedom and, more important, the imminent danger of losing their heritage and identity. The immediate problem was the physical slavery of the Jews and their dispersion in the empire and beyond it. To avert this problem, the academy decreed that all Jews were brothers, and based on a precept of the Torah, they ruled that each (Jewish) slave was to be ransomed within seven years by the nearest community.

To defend against the inroads made by Christian missionaries, Jews were ordered to refrain "from all contact with them and took measures to strengthen the belief in the Torah and its commandments" (Ben-Sasson 1976,

325). It was further decreed that “as soon as 120 males over thirteen years of age lived within commuting distance, they had the authority to establish a social community” (Dimont 1962, 121). Each community had the authority to manage their affairs independently but in accordance with the scriptures. In a way, each community was independent, yet they were bound by the common thread of the Torah. Again, Judaism was saved from extinction.

Jiayi

To the rescue of China came a rather unassuming philosopher called Jiayi (200–168 BCE) who became Grand Tutor (*tai fu*) to Emperor Wen (179–157 BCE). He was a native of Loyang, and since his youth he had exhibited intense curiosity. In early adulthood, he devoted time to the diverse teachings of the Hundred Schools of Thought, leaning toward law and order. For this reason, some scholars considered him partial to the legalists. However, his writing revealed quite the opposite. In two of his essays “On the Faults of the Qin” (*Guo Qin Lun*) and “Managing Peace” (*Zhian*), Jiayi examined the ills of the legalist philosophers and the failure of the legalists to bring peace to the empire:

> If you want to have a lasting and peaceful empire, eliminate the many feudal lords and decrease their power. Once their power is decreased, it is easy to use [the covenant] of propriety [li] and righteousness [yi] … Why did the policies of the legalists fail? The men of Qin [225–206 BCE] extended their resources to conquer the empire and exhausted their means to govern it; therefore in a matter of thirteen years, Qin was overthrown and destroyed … . Lord Shang parted with propriety and righteousness … the king of Qin … dispensed of the Way of the Kings, and in its stead, instituted his personal preferences (Hsiao 1979, 475).

Jiayi concluded that because the legalists “emphasized punishment and death sentences, officials ruled with cruelty and heartlessness, collected taxes without limits, they did not utilize the two-handled policy of carrot and stick … People in the empire gathered to respond [rebel] ‘and shadows followed substance and won grain’ (*ibid*)”.

The overthrow of the Qin (206 BCE), reasoned Jiayi, was an indication that "since ancient times to the present when [rulers] treated people with contempt, the people had always triumphed [over the ruler]. The faults of the Qin should be a warning to the Han Dynasty [206 BCE–220 CE]. The reason that the mighty Qin failed was that they did not adapt; they did not act according to the principles of li and yi (propriety and righteousness). Though the country was strong, the economy was growing, and the people enriched themselves, the lack of a government based on the principles of li and yi (propriety and righteous) was the cause of discontent" (Zhou 1974, 277–278).

> But if all people had been enabled to make a new beginning … and by fulfilling the *hope* of all people, the empire could have bestowed a vast grace upon the realm … One who governs with propriety and righteousness accumulates propriety and righteousness; one who governs with punishment and penalties accumulates punishment and penalties. Propriety (li) is a thing that interdicts action prior to their occurrence; the law interdicts only after the event. (Hsiao 1979, 475)

Jiayi emphasized the value of education to the emperor, saying that "if the heir apparent is enlightened, he will choose well-learned advisors … and people will follow the golden rule of 'cultivating the self and regulating one's family' and act according to the principles of filial piety and moral social behavior" (Zhou 1974, 283–291). He further counseled: "To alter the month upon which the year began, change the color of the vestments, put its administrative code in order, fix the title of officials, and encourage the spread of rites and music … honor the color yellow [35] and the number five" (Sima, ch. 84; Hsiao 1979, 478). These were the symbols of Confucian orthodoxy.

What Jiayi proposed was a revolution from the top to bottom. "If the emperor was educated, he would rule with virtue, understanding, and his wisdom would spread to the rest of the country. People would strive to achieve intellectual curiosity" (Zhou 1974). Jiayi exposed the crux of the controversy that raged between the legalists (*fajia*) and Confucianism (*rujia*), and he reiterated what the Chinese sage Mencius (372–289 BCE) had said a century earlier, that "the people are the most important element of a nation. If the ruler is benevolent, all will be benevolent; if the ruler is righteous, all will be righteous" (*Mencius* IV, I, 20).

Learning was the common denominator that revived the spirit of each culture: the Torah was the vehicle of survival for the Jews, and the Liji was the framework that guaranteed the survival of China. Both Jiayi and Ben Zakkai advocated the advancement of learning, and they came to the forefront in critical times to save their cultures. Just when legalism was about to engulf China, Jiayi advised the emperor to restore his authority as the spiritual leader and return to the traditional values of the ancient sages. He urged the emperor to encourage education for all and to implement reforms from the top to bottom.

In contrast, Ben Zakkai adjusted the Jewish laws to conform to the local civil laws and opened schools, or *yeshivot*, to allow each and every Jew to fulfill the commandment to "study the Torah." He implemented reforms from the bottom to the top. Both cultures bent before the winds of change, and when the winds subsided, China and Judaism emerged stronger than ever before.

The Silent Menace

Buddhism and Islam were two unlikely religions to impact China and the Jews, yet they succeeded where others failed: one quietly overwhelmed the Confucian tradition, and the other penetrated the Jewish consciousness. This occurred at the time when both cultures were in their most vulnerable period. Confucianism had just emerged from the lengthy fight against legalism, and Judaism was weakened by the spread of Christianity.

China and the Jews were so absorbed in intellectual growth and self-cultivation that they relaxed their guard against external influences. No sooner had China adopted Confucianism than Buddhism threatened the Confucian society. In addition, no sooner had the Jews deflected the threat from Christianity than they were besieged with a cultural threat from Islam. Buddhism appealed to the soul of China, while Islam appealed to the mind of the Jews; Buddhism catalyzed China, while Islam solidified Judaism.

Buddhism

Buddhists monks had already been present in the Western Regions[36] in the second century BCE, and two centuries later, they were officially invited to come to China.

> In 64 CE, Emperor Mindi of the Han Dynasty had a dream in which he saw a man with golden hair about ten and a half feet tall, with a halo round his head, who flew through the hall of the palace. One of his ministers told the emperor that it was a *shen* [spirit] dwelling in the Western Regions [Xiyu] under the name *Founi* [Buddha]. Emperor Mindi sent two emissaries to India to bring back the teachings and invited the shaman to come to China. (Si 1997, 1:383)

Chinese sources consider this event the official invitation of Buddhism to China, though Buddhist monks had been spreading the religion in Bactria[37] (Yuezhi) since the fourth century BCE, and some of them had

reached to the most western outpost of China at the Jade Gate (Yumen).[38] Buddhism required neither literary knowledge nor elaborate canons. Its message was simple: meditation (emptying the mind) was the path to sudden enlightenment. Its simplicity attracted the attention of Chinese officials who felt burdened by the Confucian canons. Early limited interaction with China motivated the monks to learn Chinese, and it is very likely that they also accompanied traders on the Silk Route to serve as translators.

But the monks' poor knowledge of Chinese also contributed to misunderstandings, and it is only by sheer coincidence that Buddhism made sense to the Chinese, who thought that the monks were preaching Daoism. When asked who they were, the monks said that they were *upasaks* (novices) which the Chinese understood as *youposai*—"good grandmother of the borders"—or disciples who came from across the borders from India. Then they were also *sramnas* (monks), which the Chinese understood to mean *shamen* (Desert Gate), or guards from the far outposts of the Jade Gate. When asked what they did, they said that they "worshipped emptiness," which corresponded in Chinese to *wuwei*, nonactivity, a Daoist concept of inactivity. Their purpose was to attain *bodhi*—enlightenment—which the Chinese understood to be *Dao* (way).

Misunderstandings like these allowed Buddhism not only to penetrate China unobstructed but even to be welcomed. The Chinese equated the Buddhist monks with Daoist priests. At the outset "there was no more than an effort to understand the *sutras* [Buddhist scriptures]" (Chang 1958, 80), and if some of the concepts did not completely match, the proximity of the ideas served as proof that Daoism had followers as far away as India.

Not deterred by these obstacles, some monks translated the sutras into Chinese language, in which form the Chinese literati believed them to be the teachings of Laozi and Zhuangzi. Chinese legends immortalized the status of the sutras by saying that when Laozi was in India,[39] he taught Buddha his beliefs. Accordingly, the Chinese equated the attainment of Dao to the attainment of *nirvana*, the ultimate stage of enlightenment in Buddhism.

But Dao in the mind of the Chinese was unidentifiable and unattainable, more closely associated with nature, a fact that went unchallenged until several centuries later, when Chinese monks completed their Buddhist training in India[40] and set out to translate the sutras. After four centuries of mistranslations, finally the educated Chinese realized that Buddhism was not a variant of Daoism. But by then, no attempts to rectify

the situation could alter the subconscious of the Chinese (Hsiao1979, 656–660).

One of the most objectionable aspects of Buddhism was *Buddhadaharma*, the law that taught people *pravrajya*—to abandon the family and society to become a monk or a nun. This was translated in Chinese as *chu-jia*, or abandoning one's family and home, in clear contradiction of the most fundamental principle of Confucianism, filial piety. Nothing could have been more unethical and unfilial in China than turning one's back on family relations. "Filial piety is the foundation of virtue and the root of civilization," stated the Book of Filial Piety (Xiaojing 1973, ch.1), which was memorized by every Chinese child.

How did these discrepancies go unnoticed for so long? Here was one of the fundamental characteristics of China that, akin to the Jews, asserted that inclusiveness was preferable to conflict. Taken out of context, abandoning the family was indeed against the grain of Chinese society, but in the context of religious harmony, the Chinese interpreted it selectively to mean "to become a recluse and monk." Monks were keepers of the temples, not hermits; therefore, their training was not at the expense of the family relations.

The Chinese saw no contradiction between becoming a hermit and fulfilling the obligations of filial piety. "Humans are the most precious in heaven and earth [universe], and nothing surpasses a man's act more than filial piety. There is no greater act of filiality than reverencing one's father" (Xiaojing 1973, ch. 9). Leaving the family for the purpose of studying was a sign of reverence to the father and family. Learning brought honor to the clan.

But this interpretation inevitably led to social and religious conflict. An orderly Chinese society started at home with respect for one's parents and extended to the relationship between a man of superior status to a man of inferior status. Reverence to one's father and to the elders was the first step in the chain of social obligations that also demanded reverence to higher authority and ultimately to the emperor. "A child's love for his parents is destiny, cannot be jarred from the heart. The subordinate's service to his superior [*junzi*] is propriety [yi]; there is nowhere in between heaven and earth [world] without a superior" (Zhuangzi 1973, ch.4). By becoming a recluse, the Buddhist denied the social obligations that went hand-in-hand with the concept of filial piety.

Not until the late eighth century CE did the Chinese literati start questioning the message of Buddhism. It fell upon Hanyu (768–824 CE), a minor official but a literary genius, and his disciple Li Ao (772–841 CE) to question the decision of Emperor Xianzeng (805–820 CE) to welcome a Buddhist relic and provide it with a state honor: "The Buddha-bone was to be put on display in the palace and also in various monasteries."

Hanyu wrote a memorial to the emperor, pointing out that such a royal treatment of a foreign-born religion went against the very grain of Chinese civilization. Drawing inspiration from the past, Hanyu pointed out that those emperors who had embraced Buddhism had enjoyed very short reign. Emperors who did not know about Buddhism reigned for long periods of time, some fifty and even one hundred years.

The emperor was offended by the remark because it implied that his reign might be short, and he ordered Hanyu to be banished (Chang 1958, 84–85). Though banishment equaled social disgrace, Hanyu was no stranger to loneliness. He had been orphaned at the age of three and grew up in difficult circumstances, but he had eventually risen to become professor of the Senior Academy and a vice minister.

However, banishment ended Hanyu's career, and he died a few years later. But his memorials ignited a spark that spread throughout the anti-Buddhist camp and gave Confucian scholars the ammunition to openly assail Buddhism.

> When benevolence [*ren*] fills the empire, there is no one in the empire who does not cherish regard for him. When righteousness [*yi*] permeates the land, no one in the empire fails to honor it. When servitude [*wei*] pervades the country, no one in the empire dares to oppose him … hence he wins without a fight, he conquers without attacking, and makes the people serve without employing one single soldier. (Dubs 1974, 1:192)

Buddhism conquered China "neither by might nor by power" (Zech. 4:6) and

> Now the followers of Buddha ignore this world and their native land and reduce the normal duties ordered by heaven to nothingness. Following their ideas, a son does not have to consider

> his father as a father, nor does a man have to regard the king as a king. He does not have even to discharge his duties as a subject. (Chang 1958, 96)

Hanyu ignited the spark that reawakened the Chinese literati, and he demanded a return to the learning of the ancient sages. He demanded that the Classics be restored to the examinations and that Buddhists be expelled. Both of his suggestions were adopted: the examinations were reinstated, and the persecution of the Buddhists culminated in their expulsion in 842 CE. Hanyu saved Confucianism from certain annihilation, but he could not eradicate Buddhism from China. The hidden mystical power of Buddhism could not be erased, but it could be contained.

Buddhism became part of mainstream China, and it was adopted as a native religion equal to Confucianism and Daoism. As long as Buddhism did not encroach on the social structure of the society and did not try to change the fabric of the political infrastructure, the Chinese embraced it and practiced it as if it were native creed. Buddhism provided something that was missing from the Chinese Classics: a life free of cares and burdens, a life without rules and authority. It appealed to the masses because of its simplicity, and it appealed to the literati because it unburdened them of the heavy responsibilities that the Confucian society cast upon them. O-Yangxiu (1007–1072 CE), a neo-Confucian philosopher, commented,

> men have been upholding Confucian ethical principles against Buddhism for years without making any headway among the mass of people because the whole social and cultural environment is indisposed to Confucianism. Civilization is in such an advanced stage of decay that one cannot hope to reassert Confucian principles without first remaking society and resurrecting institutions from the hallowed past which are more in harmony with the Confucian ideal. (Wright 1959, 34)

In this respect, Buddhism had the same influence on China as Christianity and later Islam had on the Jews in the Middle Ages. If not contained, Buddhism would have annihilated the Confucian way of life the same way Christianity and Islam had tried to transform the Jewish way of life.

The Chinese literati revived the ancient Confucian learning with a new twist. Commentaries of the ancient sages, such as Mencius and Xunzi (298–238 BCE), no longer met the spiritual interests and needs of the people (Fung 1966, 266). Buddhism awakened in them a sensation that Confucius had avoided. It tried "to demonstrate the insubstantiality and ephemerality of all things, to prove that there is nothing in the universe, including the moral order, not subject to the law of incessant change" (Wright 1959, 39). It did so by advocating meditation over acute learning, and it explained that the life cycle consisted of birth and death and that once this cycle was broken, one could reach nirvana. These concepts were in direct contradiction to the Confucian values of family, virtue, and loyalty, and had they gone unchallenged, they would have undermined the social pillars of the Chinese society.

People demanded answers to common questions that were celestial in nature. The old axiom that life started with the Five Elements (*wu xing*)[41] was no longer satisfactory. Neither was the early Daoist theory that nature revolved around its own inertia without outside interference. The theory of "do nothing, and things will be done" (*wei wuwei)* of the ancient sages of Laozi and Zhuangzi needed a rational explanation. Seasons changed; things were created, nourished, and destroyed, and people wanted to know why nature acted the way it did. Buddhism's simple solution of meditating until one became enlightened captured the imagination of the Chinese, but in the wake of Hanyu's open challenges, the Chinese literati faced the daunting task of saving China from the claws of Buddhism.

Islam

Islam made gradual inroads into the Jewish consciousness by means of intellectual and cultural transitions that went undetected for several centuries. While the ancient "Greek learning" marginally impacted Judaism, its manifestation was only external; it did not radically alter the Jewish philosophy of life and religious outlook. Jewish literature remained faithful to postexilic Judaism.

In Roman times, the danger to the Jewish community came from those apostatized to paganism and the semi-proselytes to Judaism. They saw the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE as

punishment from heaven against the leaders of the community for their opposition to the new religion (Dubnov 1956, § 70). Since the threat was physical, the Jews shored up their defenses through segregation. They retreated into their shells and lived in isolated communities.

The Torah served as the unifying factor against outside threats, and it did not distinguish between one Jew and another, nor did it discriminate between the rich and poor, between the privileged and underprivileged, between the sages and the *am-haarez* (common people).

Yet Islam impacted Jewish intellectual life as no other religion ever had. It went to the core of Jewish beliefs. Under Islam, the centers of Jewish intellectual and spiritual life shifted from Christian Europe to Islamic Spain during the seventh to the eleventh centuries. For four hundred years, the Jews enjoyed a rather distinguished status under the Muslim rulers. According to the Koran (V. 51) the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitab*) were exempted from forcible conversion, if they yielded to Muslim rule and paid a special head tax. Physically, the Jews enjoyed unprecedented autonomy, took an active role in commerce, and maintained contact with their brethren in the Diaspora. Although they still tended to live in their own quarters, they intermingled more freely with the local communities, and their worldview became universal.

The riches of great cultures, such as Persia and India, were translated into Arabic, and the Muslim rulers patronized scholars and translators. Jews actively participated in the intellectual endeavors and social life of the countries in which they lived, which exposed them to new ideas made available in Arabic. This posed a quiet menace to Jewish intellectuals, who found themselves challenged instead of oppressed. Jewish scholars developed "an appetite for the literature in Arabic, not only the imported part, but also the Koran and Muslim poetry, philology, biography, and history" (Schwarz 1956, 219).

The transformation continued for a long time without noticeable hostility, and earlier Jewish suspicion about the perils of "Greek learning" was not apparent. The Jews were gradually adapting to the Muslim culture, almost forgetting that they were Jews.

Arab literature became the stimulus for the development of secular literary works. Until then, Jewish literature had been an uninterrupted flow of sacred writing. Most Jewish works had centered on the Bible, but Islam brought meaningful changes. Jews started to appreciate other facets of life:

music, dance, and secular poetry. They identified themselves with the Muslim culture, and they thought it natural to employ Arabic as a means of expression.

Arabic literature became the general background of all that the Jews wrote. The vocabulary of the Koran found its way into Jewish writings, and Hebrew literature quoted works of Arab scientists, philosophers, and theologians. Hebrew grammar, punctuation, and inserting vowels became part of the Hebrew language, which set the stage for more great literary works. Deviation from the standards occurred under the influence of Arabic poets, and the themes grew more personal; there was talk of friendship, love, joys and sorrows of life, the pleasures of wine, reflections on the world, human aspirations, and dreams. Samuel ha-Nagid (993–1056) and Moses Ben Ezra (1055–1135) wrote wine songs; Solomon Ibn Gabirol (ca. 1020–1070), the greatest of the Jewish poets in Muslim Spain, discarded the old measures in poetry and adopted the Arab literary verse form, together with Arab meters and genres.

Yehuda Halevi (1085–1141) was proud of his Jewish heritage and planted the first seed of Jewish nationalism. He yearned for *Eretz Israel*, the Land of Israel, and he asserted that there was a connection between the religious values of Israel and its national existence. Once the Jews returned to Israel, the national calamity that befell the Jews in the Diaspora would come to an end. Halevi was born in Toledo, Spain. He studied medicine and wandered north through the Christian nations, where he composed most of his works. In 1140, he decided to make *aliya* (go "up") to Eretz Israel. He stopped in Egypt for a while and continued his journey, but we do not know if he ever made it. He died shortly after leaving Egypt. He was perhaps the first nationalist or Zionist.

The inevitable clash between the Talmudic rabbis and those secular thinkers influenced by Islam did not materialize. On the contrary, secular Jews saw that the Muslims adored and sanctified the Koran in its original poetic form. They saw that the Muslims considered the Koran and the Prophet Muhammad as incomparable and inimitable gifts of God, and the Jews felt impelled to resort to the direct study of the Torah that possessed an incontrovertible recognition of the sole words of Elohim (Schwarz 1956, 227).

This task was zealously carried out by the Karaites, who rejected the Talmud and its commentaries and instead returned to the study of the Torah

in its original Hebrew form. Both the orthodox and the secular Jewish sects felt that the Karaites undermined the spiritual foundation of the faith and considered them a grave danger to the continuance of historic Judaism.

To discredit the Karaites, Saadia Gaon (882–942), one of the great philosophers in Muslim Spain, asserted that Judaism teaches nothing contrary to "reason," and that its fundamental principles, such as creation and the unity of God, can be demonstrated by the "speculation" (*nazar*) of reason. Saadia was born in Egypt. In 915, he traveled to Palestine, Syria, and Babylon, where he became a leading member of the Academy in Sura (922) and finally Gaon (Head of the Exilarch, the political head of the Babylonian Jewry). He was perhaps the first philosopher of Judaism who tried to provide a rational explanation of the scriptures (Lewy 1961, pt. II.: 17).

This was the first time in Jewish history that rationalism guided Jewish philosophy. Each word and grammatical structure was painstakingly analyzed and explained in simple language. Abraham Ibn Ezra (1092–1167) and Rabbi Solomon Yizhaki, better known as Rashi (1040–1109) were the main personalities behind this endeavor, and Rashi's interpretation still accompanies many editions of the Torah today.

Rashi's gift was to simplify the complex, to illuminate the murky, and to elucidate the hairsplitting arguments of the Talmud so that each word was within the grasp of the students. He so perfectly combined his own comprehension with the spirit of the Bible and that of the Midrashim that it is often difficult to differentiate between his own words and the text he is quoting (Ben-Sasson 1976, 460). He wrote about Zechariah: "His prophecies are very obscure indeed. They contain visions resembling dreams that require interpretation; and we are unable to determine the true interpretations until the Righteous Teacher comes" (Ben-Sasson 1976, 461).

When the Jews saw that the Muslims tried to fix an authentic version of the Koran, the Masoretes, another Jewish sect, took it upon themselves to do a similar work on the Torah. They determined the spelling of the words, the right vowels, the proper notation for chanting, and the list of grammatical, orthographic, and lexical peculiarities of the Torah. They developed the Masorah, or the tradition, and every Hebrew Bible produced since that period represents, in the main, the text that they established (Schwarz 1956, 227–228).

Despite the almost devastating impact of foreign religions on the Jews

and China, the two cultures remained true to their cultural heritages. Both the Jews and the Chinese found their balance by returning to their original roots. And this was the beauty of their heritage: they could be influenced by other cultures and absorb foreign ideas, but they always rose above the challenges and reached new heights. It was their Golden Age of cultural expression.

Even though China was in control of her destiny, she selectively adopted Buddhist concepts but discarded the monastic life and replaced it with Chinese traditional values. In architecture, they retained the general outline of the Buddhist structures but reinstated the original wooden post-and-lintel construction. Multilevel pagodas with each story having colored, glazed tile roof and curved roofs came to characterize Chinese architecture. The manufacture of porcelain reached its zenith in the Song Dynasty (960–1279) with the lustrous green celadon; the delicately figured white porcelain, and the roughly shaped rich brown *tianmu* (heaven eyes) are often regarded as the finest works of a potter.

Painting also saw a departure from Buddhist iconographic elements to depictions of human events, landscapes with detailed human activity. The Chinese invention of this time, printing, opened the doors to scholarship. The compilation of the encyclopedias and the proliferation of literary and historic writings developed. Just to mention a few, in poetry Li Tai Bo (701–762) and Dufu (712–770) lived and wrote during this period. The former was a Daoist, wine lover, and carefree wanderer. The latter was a Confucian moralist who was deeply affected by the suffering of humanity and the injustices of life.

In prose writing, we have already mentioned how Hanyu and his straightforward writing was opposed at the time, but his vision of introducing a simpler way of writing was actually adopted in the early 1920s with the impetus of making the Chinese language easily accessible to the masses.

The Jews could not display their own architecture, paintings, and art forms; they did not have a country in which such marvels could be displayed. Yet the penetration of Islam into the Jewish consciousness challenged them to achieve higher levels in other areas of creative and intellectual works. The Babylonian Talmud was compiled and disseminated to all the Jewish communities. Jews all over the Diaspora digested the content of the Talmud and found it not quite suitable for the local conditions, but broad enough to build on.

Centers of Jewish learning in Babylon and Palestine were consulted for clarifications and interpretations, and this gave rise to compilations of

literary works in the fields of logic and law. Though Arabic became the spoken and written language of the Jews under Islam, it never fully displaced Hebrew. The Arabic of Jewish writers was written in Hebrew characters, and often it made little sense to people who were not familiar with both Hebrew and the original language of the author. The commentaries of Rashi, for instance, were written in a mixture of Hebrew, Aramaic, and French, and one needed to know all three languages to tackle his original commentaries. In this way, the Jews created a grammar and a style of their own that was more a Judeo-Arabic dialect akin to the early translations of Buddhist sutras into Chinese, which resembled Hindu text written in Chinese characters.

The Talmud united the Jews into a cohesive shell that saved them from extinction. Jews all over the Diaspora could submit questions on the *hallacha* (law) or proper conduct according to the Torah. Incidentally, the small academy of Jabneh, founded by Ben Zakkai, became the center of interpreting the Torah. The sages in Jabneh pondered all aspects of the Torah, heavily weighing the local implications, and then debated the finer points before issuing a ruling. In a sense, the sages acted like today's judges. They heard arguments from all sides then issued their opinions.

Though these deliberations were oral—hence called the Oral Law—they were compiled in later periods into what is known today as the Talmud and Mishna. These works impacted Jewish thought well into the nineteenth century, and they became an inseparable part of Judaism.

But the Talmud also contributed to the demise of Judeo-Christian relations. By the time the Talmud was canonized in the fifth century CE, it was frozen in time and ignored the crux of the issues between the Jews and the gentile world. The claim of the Christians to the title of Israel was first marginalized, and the notion that Jesus was the messiah was completely ignored. To the Talmudic sages, such claims were absurd: the Jews were the chosen people, and nothing could alter that fact. Instead, the sages sought to reinterpret the meaning of the scriptures to apply to the entire community in the Diaspora and thus create a universal Judaism.

And here was the great divide between the biblical prophets and the Talmudic sages. The former were visionaries, and they acted with prescient zeal, confining their activity to the salvation of the chosen people, while the latter were technocrats, confining their rulings to the narrow venues of the scriptures and applying them universally.

Chapter 5: The Golden Age of Reasoning

Rambam and Zhu Xi

It fell on the Jewish and Chinese philosophers of the Middle Ages to turn back the tide and return to their roots. As much as the Bible and the Classics unified the people, they also contributed to their isolation. Instead of keeping pace with the outside world, the Jews and the Chinese immersed in the study of their canons, setting themselves apart from other civilizations. Outward manifestations became especially noticeable in manner of dress and conduct. The Jews wore distinctive black robes with head dress that set them separate from other people. The Chinese, by nature of their appearance, stood in stark contrast to other cultures. It became easy to distinguish a Chinese or a Jew in any environment.

In addition, Jewish and Chinese sages instilled a false sense of superiority in their followers that was resented by outsiders. Outsiders could glimpse the inner workings of Jewish or Chinese customs, but they could not participate on equal terms unless they went through the lengthy process of conversion or sinocization. Bookish learning became the primary focus of both Chinese and Jewish culture, which often made them appear to be aloof and above the problems surrounding them.

The Jews withdrew into their own communities, and under the pretext of learning, they ignored events that did not affect them directly. Concentration on learning led them to start questioning every aspect and word of the written and oral laws. Since these laws were universal in nature and applied equally to every Jew in the Diaspora, and since the problems were local in nature, inevitably it raised questions of how to apply the universal Torah to local conditions.

Jews in India, for instance, asked about the laws of the *mikva* (ritual bath), while Jews in the Arab Peninsula wanted to know the meaning of certain words and phrases in the Talmud. Others in Europe wanted to know if the messiah had arrived, and so on (Ziv, Ben-Sasson, and Landau 1971, 75). Rote memorization of the scriptures was not enough, and the need for rationalism was more acute than ever before.

The Chinese had also distanced themselves from the outside world,

and a return to the fundamental teachings of the Classics dominated the ideological landscape of China in the Middle Ages. O Yangxiu (1007–1072), a Chinese philosopher and the avant-garde of neo-Confucianism, pointed out in his essay "On Fundamentals" (*benlun*) that

> men have been upholding Confucian ethical principles against Buddhism for years without making any headway among the mass of the people because the whole social and cultural environment is indisposed of Confucianism. Civilization is in such an advanced stage of decay that one cannot hope to reassert Confucian principles without first remaking the society and resurrecting institutions from the hallowed past which are more in harmony with the Confucian ideal. (Wright 1959, 34)

Return to the past (*fugu*) and restore the old order, was O Yangxiu's slogan. He concluded that the rote memorization of the Classics was not enough to satisfy the changing realities. Buddhism employed reason to destroy reason, and in order to counteract Buddhism, the Classics were in dire need of rational interpretation.

Unless Jewish and Chinese philosophers could explain their canon rationally, the fate of their heritage was in question. The concept that Elohim took a personal interest in each human being and was capable of changing our destiny according to our actions came under intense scrutiny. Similarly, the Chinese literati scrutinized the Buddhists who employed reason to destroy reason; they needed to come up with explanations to counteract the Buddhist logic. For the Jews, the distinction between knowledge derived from reasoning and knowledge derived from the canons became of primary importance. Equally important was the Chinese need to explain the difference between the mind of men (*renxin*) and the mind of Dao (*daoxin*).

On both sides of the cultural divide, Jewish and Chinese philosophers re-examined their roots to provide logical explanations to acts that previously were accepted as divine revelations. Several Jewish philosophers, such as Solomon Ibn Gabirol (1020–1070), Saadia Gaon (882–942), Abraham Ibn Daud (ca. 1100–1180), had advanced theories that provided some answers to these questions, but they failed to capture the attention of the communities. Similarly, Chinese philosophers like Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073), Zhang Cai (1020–1077), and the Cheng brothers (Hao 1032–1085 and Yi 1033–1107),

the forerunners of Chinese rationalism, provided logical and metaphysical explanations that engaged the Chinese mind, but they were not conclusive enough to sway the mind of the people.

Two outstanding and equally intelligent scholars commanded the attention of their people and put forward persuasive arguments for their traditions. Rabbi Moses Ben Maimonides, better known under his Hebrew name of Rambam, and Zhu Xi in China, towered above all previous medieval philosophers. They developed a systematic and analytical process of thought that appealed to both the common people and to the scholars. Neither of them created anything that did not exist in the world of philosophy of the times, but they brilliantly synthesized the thoughts of earlier philosophers.

In the philosophy of nature, they were Aristotelians, grounded in the theories of mechanical causation. In the field of moral values they were Platonic—convinced that there exists an eternal unchanging truth, which is complete in itself. But here their ideas diverge. Both Rambam and Zhu Xi applied their theories to their respective cultural conditions and created a web of philosophical arguments that influenced their respective cultures into the nineteenth century.

Rabbi Moses Ben Maimonides (1135–1204), called Rambam, in Hebrew and Musa Ibn Maymun in Arabic was born in Cordoba, Spain, at a time when the empire of the Moors was dying. With few islands of tolerance left in the Islamic world, he fled to Cairo, Egypt, where he became the personal court physician to Khalif Salah al-Din (Saladin). But in Judaism, Rambam became known for his contribution to the interpretations of the scriptures. With no authoritative yeshivas left to give definite legal decisions, Maimonides' lofty aim was to codify the entire Talmud to ensure its authority and survival.

He wrote the most comprehensive and vivid literary work explaining some of the mysteries of the Torah. Out of fourteen of his works (*Yad Hazaka*), two gained more recognition, the *Mishneh Torah* (Second to the Torah) and the *More Nevuchim* (Guide to the Perplexed). These works were so profound that even students of today's Judaism cannot consider their Jewish education complete without studying Rambam.

In the introduction to the *Mishneh Torah,* he emphasized that this work

> consists of statements clear and convincing and in accordance with the conclusions drawn from all these compilations from the time of Moses … till the compilation of the Talmud. Hence I have entitled this work *Mishneh Torah*, for the reason that a person who first reads the Written Law [Torah] and then this compilation, will know from it the Whole Oral Law, without having occasion to consult any other book between them. (Twersky 1972, 40)

The *Mishneh Torah* was written for the common people; it explained the Torah in simple language and eventually became the heritage of the Kabbalists, who used it to stultify Jewish thought. In the introduction to the *More Nevuchim* he wrote: "The first purpose of this treatise is to explain the meaning of certain terms occurring in the book of prophecy … It is not the purpose of this treatise to make it totally understandable to the vulgar or to beginners" (Twersky 1972, 236). The *More Nevuchim* was directed to the intellectual learned in the tradition of the Torah and Talmud, who used it to clear the way to *haskala* (enlightenment).

Rambam used reason to elucidate the words of Elohim. His works aimed to change the way of the Talmud, which was too wordy and too cumbersome to be of significant use to the common people. Maimonides took it upon himself to revise and collate a comprehensive version of Jewish learning by omitting some of the hairsplitting arguments; he avoided mentioning the names of the debating rabbis and summarized the hallacha according to the Talmud.

Furthermore, to smooth the awkward style of the Talmud, Rambam eliminated its incomprehensible division and replaced it with his own, which was more in line with human logic. Chapters such as Baba Kama, Baba Mazia, and Sanhedrin were replaced with Book of Knowledge, Ethics, and Judgments, etc., names that meant something to the people. For him, knowing Elohim was the highest level of achievement—higher than ethical attainment.

He composed these works to reawaken Jewish learning by providing logical explanations of the tenets of the scriptures and the Talmud. He felt the Jews needed to harmonize their faith with the philosophies of the time, and his works enabled the intellectuals to adhere to traditional Judaism and at the same time to abide by the strictest standards of reason (Schwarz 1956, 252). His historic function was to restore prophetic Judaism as a spiritual lifeline to

the Jews (Dimont 1962, 179), thus linking the dying East and the awakening West.

His opponents accused Rambam of being a transmitter of “Greek learning” in Arab grab, yet to his credit, he was the first writer to perceive Christianity and Islam as historical extensions of Judaism. He also clearly saw the new pattern of Jewish dispersal and its attendant dangers to the Jews.

Zhu Xi (1130–1200) was a native of what today is called Fujian Province. He spent his early years studying with his father, who was a minor official. China was in turmoil; the Jurchen had just defeated the Song in 1127 CE and established the Qin Dynasty, also known as the Northern Song Dynasty.[42] Those events left a deep impression on Zhu Xi, who, by age ten, displayed his disgust with the “surrendering mentality” of the court.

Although Zhu Xi’s writing at the time reflected his naïveté, his brilliant thinking caught the attention of the examiner who remarked on his *cheng liang* (master) examination paper: “I received an [exam] paper from a *housheng*[43] [member of the younger generation]. The entire three sections of the essay dealt with [practical] measures to improve the affairs of the court. He will be an extraordinary man in the days to come” (Zhang and You, no date, 289).

At age nineteen, Zhu Xi received the *jinshi* (doctorate) degree and was appointed District Keeper of Records. For a short period of time, he served in various official capacities, but because of his outspokenness, he was dismissed from each position.

Zhu Xi’s opponents mounted a massive effort to discredit him by calling his teaching “Dao learning,” which, at the time, connoted “false theory.” One of his critics went even further; he memorialized the emperor, accusing Zhu Xi of treason, and asked for capital punishment. Subsequently, Zhu Xi was stripped of all his official titles and dismissed from public service, and he retired to a surrounding where “he wore enough clothing to keep him warm, ate just enough to prevent starvation, and lived in a house just well enough built to protect him from the wind and rain” (Chang 1958, 253).

Though Zhu Xi’s teaching was not appreciated in his own time, Emperor Renzong of the Mongol Dynasty (1279–1368), who ascended the throne in 1311, was so impressed by Zhu Xi’s commentary of the Four Books (the Analects of Confucius the Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, and

the Book of Mencius) that he required it to be an integral part of the examination system. From 1313 until the abolition of the examination in 1905, Zhu Xi's commentary became the standard guide for scholars and officials, and it became the official commentary on the Classics.

In 1712, Xuanhua, the chief examiner, in support of the inclusion of Zhu Xi's commentary in the examinations, wrote a memorial to Emperor Kangxi pointing out that

> only Zhu Xi's commentary to the Classics … clearly proves that he attained the
> golden mean of rationalism (li). Now five hundred years later, his "word by
> word and sentence by sentence" commentary is still undoubtedly unsurpassed.
>
> Look at this, [his works] benefited the prose and other meritorious masterpieces. I know his works thoroughly and do not know of anyone whose words deserve to better praise than that of Zhu Xi. He [comes] after Confucius and Mencius. (Zhang and You, no date, 347)

The Emperor was so impressed by this recommendation that he warned the candidates "dare not say anything without Zhu Xi commentaries [to the Classics] and dare not act without his ethics." (*ibid*, 347) Anyone who diverged from Zhu Xi was considered a usurper of the Classics. Zhu Xi was elevated to the status of a saint.

Zhu Xi wrote 140 books, the majority—seventy-two of them—devoted to the elucidation of the Four Books. His works were written in clear, concise language and became the official interpretation of the Classics. His "word by word, sentence by sentence" commentary was comparable in style and depth to the oral and written style of Rashi–, the French-born Jewish commentator. However, Zhu Xi's methodology and reasoning was equal in lucidity and persuasiveness to those of Rambam. Both Rambam and Zhu Xi used reason to fight nonnative reason: Rambam used active intellect to prove the uniqueness of Judaism, and Zhu Xi used li (reason) to refute Buddhism and to elevate Chinese Confucianism.

Zhu Xi wrote his treatise out of the conviction that the literati needed to be persuaded and reassured that the return to the ancient orthodoxy had its

roots in rationalism. His starting point was similar to that of Maimonides—that at the most fundamental level, the universe consisted of two principles that were in constant motion. One he called li, an incorporeal principle, and the other qi, the corporeal substance, or form or mass.

Zhu Xi believed that li was the source of heaven and earth and all things and creatures, and that the changes in the universe were in constant movement. Li actually existed before physical form and was the principle of all things; li was the source, and qi (mass) was created out of li. They were inseparable. Before the creation of the world, li existed. If li existed, there was the world. If there had been no li, there would be no world. Since li existed, there was qi in motion, which produced a variety of things. Li is complete and is all things as a whole and in each thing individually.

The relationship between the li in whole and li in the individual is similar to moonlight shining on objects. Each object has its own moonlight, but this moonlight is moonlight as a whole.

The qi is mass, or substance (as opposed to style), in things, which in association with li, gives objects form. Li explains the reality and universality of things; it is incorporeal, one, eternal and unchanging, uniform, constituting the essence of things, and always good, but it does not contain the dichotomy of good and evil, and it does not create things.

Qi explains physical form, individuality, and the transformation of things. It is physical, many, transitory and changeable, unequal in things, constituting their physical substance, involving both good and evil, and it is the agent of creation (Chan 1970, 590).

What Zhu Xi called li and qi were tantamount to what Rambam called Elohim and His creation. As he wrote in the Mishneh Torah,

> The basic principle of all basic principles and the pillar of all sciences is to realize the there is a First Being who brought everything into being. All existing things, whether celestial, terrestrial, or belonging to an intermediate class, exist only through His true existence … Even if all other beings were nonexistent, He alone would still exist. Their nonexistence would not involve His existence. For all beings are in need of Him; but He is in no need of them … (Twersky 1972, 43–44)

That Elohim is incorporeal rests in the fact that nothing can move

itself; hence, everything that moves is moved by something other than itself. And since a finite body cannot have an infinite power, and Elohim is infinite and immovable, His powers are not affected by time. Elohim is the eternal cause of the eternal motion. The existence of Elohim is neither derived nor dependent from elsewhere. Since He is incorporeal and He created the corporeal, He cannot be of the corporeal kind. There exist many bodies, and heaven and earth are finite in magnitude, but reason (Zhu Xi's li) dictates that there is only one infinite, incorporeal principle, and that is Elohim. Elohim possesses the attributes of life, power, and wisdom simultaneously, while reason would dictate that one is prior to the other.

That the Holy One in Judaism is not physical body is explicitly set forth in the Torah and in the prophets: "[Know therefore] that the Lord, He is God in Heaven above, and upon Earth beneath" (Deut. 4:39)—and a physical body cannot be in two places at one time. Furthermore, it is said, "For you saw no manner of similitude" (Deut. 4:15); and again it is said, "To whom then will you compare Me that I should be like him?" (Isa. 40:25). If God were body, He would be like all other bodies (Twersky 1972, 44).

Four things must be removed from Elohim: 1) corporeality, 2) affections, 3) potentiality, and 4) resemblance to His creatures. The true attributes of God are negative ones. God cannot have positive attributes because He has no essence different from His existence. Negative attributes are of values that lead us to knowledge of God, because in negation, no plurality is involved. Incorporeal is negative; eternal signifies "not caused" (Husik 1958, 264–265).

How do we know that Elohim and li exist? Both Rambam and Zhu Xi set out to prove the incorporeality of the One. Maimonides' argument was not necessarily original. His ideas had already been expressed by earlier philosophers, but his addition of the element of motion made his argument more scientific. All motion is change and is the realization of potential. Every changeable thing is divisible; hence, every movable thing is divisible. That is, every body is divisible. What is not divisible is not movable and, hence, cannot be a body.

Motion and time were the principal elements in the creation of the world. A composite of prime matter (no matter before) and form is eternal; so are time and motion. Motion is not subject to the beginning and end. Everything that comes into being after a state of nonexistence requires motion to precede it, namely the actualization from nonbeing. A body

moving another must itself be in motion at the same time.

Being in a body as either an accident or consisting of the essence of the body implies a natural form; therefore, a body has corporeal powers. Whatever is incorporeal cannot be subject to number, unless it is a corporeal power, in which case the individual powers are numbered with their matters or bearers. Time and motion are eternal. Hence, there must be a body moving eternally and existing actually (Husik 1958, 254–260).

Zhu Xi's argument was also based on the work of earlier philosophers, but the reaffirmation that li is not a body and therefore cannot be moved was his addition. The li, the Great Ultimate[44] (*Taiji*), has no physical form but consists of principle in its totality. Before heaven and earth existed, there was assuredly this principle (li). It is the principle that "through movement generates the yang [positive]." It is also this principle that "through tranquility generates the yin [negative] … Does the Great Ultimate not split into parts? Fundamentally, there is only one Great Ultimate. This is similar to the fact that there is only one moon in the sky, but when its light is scattered upon the rivers and lakes, it can be seen everywhere. It cannot be said that the moon has been split." (Chan 1970, 638)

The li is one, but its manifestations are demonstrated in thousands of ways. The Taiji is the li of heaven, earth, and all things (Chang 1958, 257–258). Thus for instance:

> During a period of fifteen hundred years, the li [principles], as handed down by Yao and Xun [two of the three sage emperors] … and Confucius has never been put to practice for even a single day in the world. But, beyond human intervention, it is eternally there. It is simply what it is, and is eternal and immortal. It cannot perish, even though men have done violence to it during the last fifteen hundred years. The li does not cease to be. What ceases to be is man's practice of it." Li is the same both in the times past and present. Those who follow it succeed, and those who violate it fail … No one can have any achievement without following the li. The ancient sages, being cultivated in the wisest way of the fundamental, could hold the golden mean, and therefore what they did was all entirely good from the beginning to the end. The so-called heroes in modern times have never undergone such cultivation and have moved in the world for only selfish desires (Fung 1966, 303–304).

"The mind of heaven and earth is to produce things," wrote Zhu Xi in the opening chapter of *A Treatise on Ren* (ch.1). In the production of man and things, they receive the mind of heaven and earth as their mind. The moral qualities of the mind of heaven and earth are four: origination, flourish, advantages, and firmness. In the mind of man there are also four moral qualities—namely, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom—and benevolence embraces all. In their emanation and function, they constitute the feelings of love, respect, being right, and discrimination between right and wrong. "Ren [benevolence] is a man's mind." Both substance and function of the four moral qualities are thus fully presented without mentioning them. Before feelings are aroused, this substance is already existent in its completeness. After feelings are aroused, its function is infinite (Chan 1970, 593–594).

Knowledge and action always require each other, taught Zhu Xi. When one knows something but has not yet acted on it, his knowledge is shallow. After he has experienced it, his knowledge will be increasingly clear, and its character will be different from what it was before. The efforts of both knowledge and action must be exerted to the utmost. As one knows more clearly, he acts more earnestly, and as he acts more earnestly, he knows more clearly. We must know first before we act. That is why the Great Learning first talks of the extension of knowledge, the Doctrine of the Mean puts wisdom ahead of humanity and courage (ch.20), and Confucius (Analects 15:32) first of all spoke of knowledge being sufficient to attain its objective (Chan 1970, 609). Zhu Xi wrote in the Commentary on the Great Learning (ch. 5),

> There is no intelligence [utterly] lacking knowledge, and no single thing in the world without li. But because the investigation of li is not exhaustive, in some way it is not complete. This is why the first instruction of the Great Learning is that the student must proceed to further gain exhaustive knowledge of those [with which he is not familiar], thus striving to extend his knowledge to the farthest point. When one has exerted oneself for a long time, finally one morning, a complete understanding will open before one. (Fung 1966, 306).

He used this argument to reject completely the notion of sudden

enlightenment in Buddhism. Sudden enlightenment rejects the notion of the condition of the mind, which is to feel and know to be intelligent or is a motive of desire. What Buddhism called mind was the innermost consciousness only, which has nothing to do with the external world. Man on the transcendental level is endowed with principles called li, which enables him instinctively to know love, sense of duty, decency, and wisdom. On a natural level, the mind can feel, understand, and discriminate between right and wrong.

> Man is born in a state of calmness. This is his nature from heaven. When man is stimulated and moved by external things, this is desire arising from nature … When man is born with proper means conferred on him by heaven, he is perfectly equipped with all kinds of li. But this is prior to the stage when he becomes subject to stimulation. Beside his nature, a man is physical body. Since he has a body and a mind, he cannot help but receive sensations from the external world. (Chang 1958, 272–273)

Confucian rationalism derived from three basic Confucian attitudes:

- The universe is characterized by order, regularity, and a harmonious integration of its parts
- It is possible for man to discern this order underlying things and events
- To devote oneself to what the Great Learning calls the systematic study of “things” (man, his institutions and history, and the Classics), and in this way to contribute to the accumulation of knowledge, is the highest calling of the junzi (gentleman). (Wright 1959, 39)

The “investigation of things” was more properly the examination of moral problems than an inquiry associated with the natural sciences. For Zhu Xi, who stressed objective learning, the directive to investigate things was carried out mainly in the scriptural and historical studies, and to a lesser extent, in the study of contemporary social problems. Zhu Xi remained true to Confucius’s primary concern with the relation between self-cultivation (learning) and social order, and devoted little attention to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.

“A young man when at home, should be filial, when away from home,

respectful to his elders … when all that is done, if he has energy to spare, to pursue learning" (Analects, I,6). The Great Learning speaks of the investigation of things but not the investigation of li. The reason is that to investigate li is like clutching at emptiness in which there is nothing to catch. When we speak of the investigation of things, it means that we should seek "what is above mass" through "what is within mass." Li is abstract, and things are concrete. We investigate the abstract through the concrete.

Man's nature, according to Zhu Xi, is his li—the Supreme Ultimate (*taiji*). The li of all men is constant, but unfortunately, their qi (substance) is not. If one's qi is impure, one is foolish and degenerate: "If one could but realize that it is human desire that obscures his true nature, he would be enlightened" (Creel 1953, 169).

If institutional change proved so difficult at court, and the idealized government of the Book of Rites seemed unachievable in the circumstances of the time, it was still possible to accomplish some of the social objectives of Confucians through the infiltration, into every household and school, of the Confucian rules of social interaction. Zhu Xi had the widest and deepest influence on Chinese society simply through the more intensive application of traditional elements (Wright 1959, 37). The Chinese literati, who by definition comprised secluded elite, isolated themselves to engage in literary and theoretical debates.

What Zhu Xi called mind, Maimonides identified as intellectual apprehension. Both are pure and incorporeal. "Let us make man in our image after our likeness" (Gen. 1:26)—this thought led the Jews to believe that God has a man's form. But the Bible makes it clear that God is bigger that that and forbids the Jews to create an image of Him because the matter of which He is composed is not flesh and blood (Twersky 1972, 246). The image that is referred to here was the specific form, which is intellectual apprehension and not just the shape and configuration.

"Human intellect has objects of apprehension that it is within its power and according to its nature to apprehend" wrote Rambam in the *Guide to the Perplexed* (Twersky 1972, 252). He based his argument on the nineteenth Psalm: "The heavens are telling the glory of God … day and day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge" (Psm. 19:1–2). That Elohim rules through the angels is evident from both the Bible and the Talmud. "Let *us* make man in our image" (Gen. 1:26—italics are mine). "Let *us* go down and confuse their speech" (Gen. 11:7) is explained in the

Sanhedrin 38b Babylonian Talmud: “God never does anything without first looking at the celestial family” (Husik 1958, 268).

> The universe consists of a series of ten concentric spheres, each endowed with a soul and moved by intelligence. The tenth sphere he called the Active Intelligence. Through the Active Intellect, knowledge is bestowed on the human mind. At birth it is merely a potency, and we may be said to possess only as much mind as has been actualized through learning and achievement. Life after death is not the continued existence of the human body, its appetites, passions, and emotions, but the survival of that portion of the mind which has been actualized. It is this portion that rejoins the Active Intellect and is immortal. (Schwarz 1956, 250)

Intellectual pursuits constitute the noblest activity of the soul; the form of the living body leads to virtue. The purpose of human life and activity is to know God as far as it is possible. Good music, beautiful scenery, works of art, etc., should not be pursued for their own sake but because they reflect the work of God.

What Zhu Xi called knowledge, Maimonides attributed to wisdom (*hokhma*). Wisdom can be applied to acquiring arts, moral virtues, such as in “And teach his elders wisdom” (Psm. 105:22), but it is not the final objective of human cultivation. First and foremost, man should obtain knowledge of the Torah, then obtain wisdom: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and know Me” (Jer. 9:23). The greatest perfection in the opinion of the multitude is that of “the rich man in his riches,” below him “the mighty man in his might,” and below him “the wise man in his wisdom.” This last one is the person who possesses the moral virtues; such a person is also held in high esteem by the multitude (Twersky 1972, 356). It is evident that Rambam observed the behavior of the people who regard the attributes of wisdom, wealth, and might that humans try to achieve, and in the process forget that the main objective of the mind is to know Elohim, devoting time to learning His words and discarding the selfishness of people.

A detailed comparative study of Rambam and Zhu Xi would consist of

several volumes and is beyond the scope of this book. Here, I have briefly highlighted a few common denominators to demonstrate that these two philosophers came to the forefront just in time to save the legacies of their people. Was it a coincidence? First of all, the possibility of any communication between Rambam and Zhu Xi was nil; they were unaware of each other, and neither knew anything of the other's culture. That they came to the world stage at the same time was a historical coincidence. Yet the parallelism in their thinking, their analyses, their reasoning, and the commentaries on the origins of their respective canons makes one wonder if destiny was not a factor.

Both the Jews and the Chinese were at a junction in their history where their survival was at stake. For the Jews, the problem was the tangible infiltration of the Arabic culture into the consciousness of the Jews. The Arabs almost succeeded where the Christian had failed. The sagacity of the Arab intellectual life so fascinated Jewish philosophers that they almost forgot their own heritage. The expansiveness of Arab culture attracted even Rambam, who expressed himself in Arabic. Had it not been for the translation of his works into Hebrew, the Jews would have been unaware of the depth of Arabic influence. They would have immersed themselves deeper into the Arabic culture and integrated further into the local surroundings.

That was what happened to the Chinese Jews; for centuries, the Jews in China were isolated, and in the belief that they were the last remnants of their faith, they struggled to maintain their unique way of life.[45] By the time the community was brought to the attention of the West, they identified themselves with the Muslims to enjoy the status of a minority.

For the Chinese, the problem was that Buddhism had already infiltrated their consciousness; it was part of everyday life, and they could no longer distinguish between Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Buddhist icons were displayed in homes, at official sites, and in the homes of lower-class people, literati, and officials—and even in the imperial palace. High-ranking officials and common people alike adopted the Buddhist way of meditation and often left their families to become monks. Admittedly, even Zhu Xi was a devout Buddhist; only his high intelligence and penetrating mind made him realize that Buddhism and Confucianism did not mix.

Beneath the antagonism and mutual exclusiveness, there existed a passive awareness of intellectual endeavor. It allowed the Jews and the Chinese to reflect upon their past and future. For the Chinese, the past was

enshrined in the Liji and served as an indicator of how to solve present and future problems. For the Jews, the past was not conductive, the future was unknown, and only the present could be derived from the Torah.

Medieval Jewish and Chinese philosophers used reason to try to explain the dangers inherent in assimilating alien cultures. They argued that assimilation led to extinction, and only by remaining truthful to their roots could they survive. But these ideas were lost on the people, and it took two exceptionally brilliant thinkers, the Jewish Rambam and the Chinese Zhu Xi, to elevate these arguments to new heights.

Neither Rambam nor Zhu Xi received appropriate recognition during their lifetime. At the close of the Middle Ages, the Jews withdrew into their shells, and outside learning had little effect on them. The establishment of ghettos, the rise of mysticism (Kabbalah), and the opposition of the rabbis to Rambam created great controversies, and many Orthodox Jews regarded his teaching as closer to the Greek learning than to Judaism.

Nevertheless, the philosophical discourses in the *Guide to the Perplexed* caused a revolution in the development of Jewish thought. “The lamp of Elohim is the soul of man, searching all the inward parts” (Prov. 20:27). This by itself made Rambam one of the great teachers of Judaism: he unveiled the internal struggle of rabbinic Judaism. He asserted that the Talmudic scholar is also a philosopher and, as such, required that the leadership of the Jews be in the hands of men learned in the ways of the Torah (Guttmann 1953, 167). As the dark ages descended on the Jews, Rambam’s influence emerged in the eighteenth century as a predominant force in the *Haskala* (Enlightenment) movement.

Zhu Xi had vocal critics too. Opposition first came from the orthodox Confucians who were devoted Buddhists and who questioned some of the philosophical treatises of Zhu Xi. Is the mind complete in itself and innate, or does it comes from without? Does the correct approach to Dao lie in knowledge? The most damaging criticism of Zhu Xi came from idealists of the fifteenth century who called his interpretation of Confucianism “fragmented and isolated details and broken pieces” (Chan 1970, 654). These critics pointed out that the Confucians were no longer guardians of the tradition and the examinations were no longer an avenue for serving the people and bringing peace to the world but rather were for personal profit and success.

Despite this opposition, three subsequent dynasties, the Yuan, Ming,

and Qing, over a period of more than six hundred years (1279–1912) adopted Zhu Xi's *lixue*, rationalism, as the standard textbook for officials and the standard for the examination system.

Chapter 6: Interlude

From Exile to Self-Awakening

At the dawn of the Middle Ages, the Jews and China entered a phase of self-reflection followed by an interlude. It was a period of calm before the storm. First, they secluded themselves from the outside world to reflect upon their spiritual values and to examine their innermost feelings. Then, for the next three hundred years, they resigned themselves to a hopeless, subservient role full of pessimism and uncertainty.

China's literati retreated into the shell of Confucian orthodoxy, shutting out the world. Though foreigners forced their way into China, they never succeeded in making meaningful inroads. The literati saw reality through the prism of Chinese culture and rejected any foreign overtures and influences. The emphasis was on the inner experience of the mind, which came at the expense of the Classics. They wrote about meditation and reflections of the essentials. Each group had a formula to express its approach to Dao.

> When a philosopher has a formula, it means that he has a way of approach and also an intimate knowledge of the things that he discusses. The principles of this world are so numerous and complicated that they must be reduced to their simplest form if they are to be an object of actual reflection. For the public, a philosophy without a theorem is like an explorer who loses himself in the land while trying to map it out. The formula is important because it is the lamp, which illuminates the reader's path. (Chang 1962, 24)

Another characteristic of the Chinese philosophers of the time was their sharp rationalism and overspeculative nature. While the Song philosophers never ventured far away from the basic Confucian teachings, the Ming[46] philosophers ventured into the premise that "reality is beyond good and evil." Good and evil exist at the level of being only, and another level above being is the true reality: emptiness, where no evil is to be found and

where also there is no place for goodness. Alternatively, naturalness, pleasure, and the sense of innocence meant spontaneity and freedom from worry, which was the noblest path of human life.

The literati formed debate groups that were originally intended for pure philosophical discussions but that in time became centers of mass meetings. These centers attracted many disciples and became powerful factors in the political life of the times (Chang 1962, 26).

Similarly, the Jews retreated into their shells; communities lived in isolated enclaves known as ghettos and distanced themselves from the outside world. Their only interactions with outsiders occurred out of necessity. This period did not produce any major works; it rather focused on the individual and his place in the community.

Individuals became fascinated with ancient mystical learning and tried to interpret the Torah in those terms. Though mainstream orthodox leaders discouraged the study of mysticism, younger generations were looking for answer in the Kabbalah, or "secret learning." In the Middle Ages, the rationalists transformed Judaism, and during the interlude, the Kabbalists provided an impetus to reflect upon Judaism. The rationalists engaged in the development of the mind over the soul; they expressed themselves in terms of reason, and they did not reflect upon spirit. While they produced an ideology to rescue Judaism, they neglected the soul of culture. The mystics, on the other hand, did not seek logical interpretations; they sought deep involvement and connection to the main forces active in the culture.

In this sense, the two movements, the rationalist and the mystics, were interrelated and interdependent. They were not opposed to each other; rather the philosophical enlighteners frequently betrayed mystical tendencies. And often the mystics used language from the vocabulary of the philosophers.

At the dawn of the Middle Ages, the mystics had successfully usurped the authority of the orthodox sages and rational philosophers by attributing the events that afflicted the Jews to events that would occur prior to the appearance of the messiah. According to the mystics, the anti-Jewish riots in Spain in 1391, the fall of Constantinople in 1453, and the expulsion from Spain in 1492 were all signs that redemption was near.

More than ever before, the Jews were elated, and with their spirits lifted, they were a captive audience to anyone who brought news of the redemption. To prepare for the big event, they flocked to the synagogues and devoted themselves to prayer and worship. Conditions were ripe for the

development of the mystics in both Judaism and China.

The Mongol conquest of 1279 CE traumatized China and served as a reminder that China was not in control of her destiny. Only the "barbarian" Qin Dynasty (221–206 BCE) caused an equally deep trauma to China. Both conquests had a lasting impact that shaped the way China interacted with foreigners. Though the Qin unified China, the violence they employed left deep scars in the Chinese mind.

One positive aspect of the unification was that, until the Mongol conquest, China had never lost total sovereignty, though she lost partial control of the country. During the Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE), the country was divided into two dynasties: the Northern Song (Qin) controlled by the Jurchen "barbarians," and the Southern Song, controlled by the Chinese. Despite this division, China enjoyed peace and unprecedented prosperity during the Song Dynasty. That ended with the Mongol invasions.

The Mongols differed from other foreign conquerors in that they adhered to the Confucian code of conduct only selectively. They observed only those rites that did not interfere with their style of control. China was in shock, and Chinese historians called the Mongol conquest a second catastrophe.

> From antiquity down to our time, two catastrophes have brought a great change to our civilization. One of them was caused by the Qin [225–206 BCE], and the other by the Yuan-Mongol Dynasty [1279–1368]. After these two catastrophes, nothing is left of the compassionate, amicable, and creative forms of government of the early kings. (Bauer, 259)

The Jews were equally traumatized when they were expelled from Spain in 1492. Not since the exile in 586 BCE had the Jews seen a catastrophe of this magnitude. The beginning of the Diaspora had the same impact as the brutal unification of China in 221 BCE, with one difference: China became united, and the Jews dispersed. Now, a second catastrophe descended upon the Jews, which had the same effect as the Mongol conquest of China. After five hundred years of relative peace and prosperity, the Jews were suddenly reminded that they were not in control of their destiny, and they were unceremoniously expelled from Spain, their last bastion in the

West.

Neither China nor the Jews had completely recovered from their first catastrophes when the second occurred. China developed an intense dislike of foreigners, and at the same time, foreigners had an intense dislike of Jews. China had sought comfort in returning to her roots, only to be confronted by powerful outside influences that she was not prepared to face. Western powers forced China to deal with them and usurped the traditional values. The Jews also sought comfort in their roots; they immersed themselves in the study of the Torah, only to be awakened by a powerful enemy that they did not know how to deal with: anti-Semitism.

These catastrophes hardened the determination and the inner spirits of both cultures. If, prior to these calamities, China and the Jews were still vulnerable, afterward their survival was a matter of outliving their nemeses. Though China survived the brutal unification, she could never overcome her suspicion of strict legal systems and of foreign overtures. A strong sense of cultural superiority—morality, humanity, loyalty, and virtue—guided China into the nineteenth century.

A radically different outcome afflicted the Jews, who, due to the lack of a country of their own, distanced themselves from cultural superiority. The exiles faced practical problems, the most urgent of which was to find a way to remain cohesive and provide guidance to the Jews scattered throughout the four corners of the world. They re-examined and reinterpreted the basic code of conduct of the Torah to apply to the entire Jewish community in the Diaspora under the banner of the “will of Elohim.” Only the messiah could bring salvation and redemption. The common denominator of these catastrophes lies in the manner in which they were interpreted.

Both China and the Jews blamed themselves for these catastrophes and saw in them an expression of dissatisfaction of the celestial will. It was a test of heaven or Elohim. Both cultures passed the test to overcome the difficult times of conquest, subjugation, intolerance, and exile. Yet these catastrophes left deep scars in the psyches of each people, touching every sphere of life and feelings.

The catastrophes created an environment that made both cultures receptive to mystical ideas. Chinese popular religion and Jewish mysticism took center stage. Loss of control of their destinies elevated the mystics in the public awareness in both cultures to higher consciousness. If the mystics had operated on the fringes of the society before, now they enjoyed popular

support.

This change in fortunes altered the outer aspects of mystics and the inner content of the messianic movement. The Chinese “teaching societies” (mystics) became the catalyst for anti-foreign movements, while Jewish mystics saw that redemption would come soon. While China considered her destiny as part of the historical cycles, the Jews concluded that the end of the days was near and the messiah was ready to come to end their suffering.

These catastrophes had a direct impact on the future direction of both cultures. The Mongol conquest and the Spanish expulsion were the low points of cultural development within which the mystical movements found expression and followers. Both China and Judaism were preparing to face the end of days, and both set in motion provision for their survival.

The Chinese had already concluded that the end Golden Age of Confucianism had arrived in 1127 when the emperor was forced to move the capital in Hangzhou[47]. The old capital city of Kaifeng[48] became the capital of the Jurchen conquerors, a nomadic tribe of non-Chinese origin. The Jurchen conquest demonstrated that too many lives, too many cultural treasures, too much faith in the sanctity of China had been lost. Yet the only comforting thought was that the Mandate of Heaven continued to lie with the Middle Kingdom. Even though China had been divided, the Jurchen adopted the Confucian values.

On the other hand, under the Mongols, China suffered more than a political setback; she suffered the greatest devastating spiritual catastrophe that she had ever experienced. The Chinese became exiled in their own land. They were no longer master of their own destiny, and their culture entered into a new phase. She was forcibly exposed to Western contacts and influences. Though non-Chinese minorities had intermingled with the Han people before, now they became part of the social and cultural landscape, and it was hard to differentiate them.

The Mongols further hastened this integration by establishing a new social order. They divided the society into four categories: 1) the Mongols, including the original tribes; 2) the *semu*, colored-eyed or foreigners, including tribes from the steppes, Muslims, and inhabitants of the Western Regions, including the Euro-Asian people who dwelt in the region; 3) the Chinese (Han), including the assimilated foreigners such as the Khitans and Jurchen; and 4) the people of the Southern Song Dynasty. The Mongols excluded from government all members of the lower classes, including the

Chinese (Qi 2002, 83). They gradually replaced Chinese values with "noncultured values," and the administration became quasi-Chinese. Many talented Chinese scholars refused to serve under the Mongols, and the Mongols tended to ignore them.

Forced to rely on the less educated ones, China experienced the first literary forms that appealed to the masses and were written in vernacular (*baihua*) Chinese instead of the traditional classical literary language. The novel and drama were notable but did not spread to the literary circles. They appealed to the majority of literate Chinese, like fiction in the West, and reflected the social values at the time. The internal exile was short-lived by Chinese standards and ended in 1368 with the restoration of the orthodox Chinese values. This humiliation and degradation solidified China's animosity and antagonism toward foreigners in general and toward the Mongols in particular, and its impact was felt until the end of the Mao era in the 1980s.

The Jews faced the grim reality that fewer and fewer places admitted them. Ideally, they wanted to end their wandering, to return to Jerusalem and restore the Temple, but only the Ottoman Empire offered them haven. It not only admitted Jews but welcomed them for their skills.

Some of the exiles who went to Jerusalem found it crowded with Christians and Muslims, and they were forced to relocate the center of learning to the city of Sefad in the Galilee Mountains. In no time, they turned Sefad into the spiritual center of the Jews in exile. Here the sages tried to regain their control of the entire dispersed Jewish community by reconvening the Sanhedrin, the high court, and by invoking the authority to ordain rabbis (*semichut*).

These endeavors were not popular with the Jews in the Diaspora; they had the feeling that the "celestial will" had spoken and the coming of the messiah was near. Events following the Spanish catastrophe and the concentration of Jews in fewer places were prophecies preceding the days prior to the coming of the messiah.

Sentiments were so high that reality and dreams lost meaning, and only talk of salvation and redemption was on the minds of the Jews. Thus, when one of the most respected sages, Rabbi Isaac Luria, the "holy of Ari" died mysteriously in 1572 at the age of 38, his death was seen as a prophecy comes true: "Enoch walked with Elohim; and he was not, for Elohim took

him" (Gen. 5:24).

The Teaching Societies and the Mystics

Both China and the Jews used the historical interval between antiquity and modern times to reflect upon themselves. Until the dawn of the Middle Ages, both cultures tried to explain their canons in terms of reason, but now the focus shifted to the individual and his needs. The earlier logical and rational thinking had left out the individual, and now both cultures revisited their scriptures from a different perspective, one that included the individual and his feelings.

Jewish mystics started to challenge the validity of the oral law, while in China, the outlawed "teaching societies," known in the West as secret societies, openly challenged Confucian orthodoxy. In this respect, both the mystics and the "teaching societies" shared a common goal: to return to the pure ways of the ancients. The mystics wanted to preserve the purity of Judaism, and the "teaching societies" wanted to preserve the purity of Confucianism.

They also shared a common adversary: the orthodox communities that loathed and often persecuted them. Jewish leaders excommunicated the mystics, while the Chinese outlawed the teaching societies. But these measures had limited effect. The masses flocked to these movements. Jews in the Diaspora inexplicably followed the messianic leaders and immortalized them in stories (Scholem 1971, 349–350). Similarly, the Chinese immortalized the leaders of the "teaching societies" in novels; they became folk heroes to the common people and scholars alike. These stories and novels greatly impacted the course of Jewish and Chinese culture.

Chinese Teaching Societies

China started to question openly Confucianism and its rigid standards. Because during the Song Dynasty (960–1279), the examination system was the only path to a career as a government official, the number of candidates who failed increased enormously. Their disenchantment with Confucianism, with the rigid system of government, and with China's failure to fight the

foreign invaders, pushed the disenchanted to the fringes of society, and they often joined religious leaders who managed to articulate the suffering of the lower classes. The combination of these two forces revived the teaching societies, or brotherhoods (*jiaohui*; Bauer 1976, 223), that operated openly in the countryside and in the shadows and often became so influential as to be reckoned shadow governments.

The leaders of these societies sought to reorganize the state and society, and for this purpose, they used all the tools available to them, manipulating Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist beliefs to suit their purpose. Officially, they opposed the oppressive taxes and corrupt officials, but their real aims were to put an end to the humiliation inflicted by the barbarians and to attain a united, strong empire.

Both Chinese and Jewish heterodoxy derived from disillusionment with orthodoxy. In China, the fasting mediums (*qi-wu*), shamans, fasting wizards, or those abstaining from eating meat, practiced spirit possession that differed from true shamanism wherein the shaman's soul leaves his body and goes on a magical flight to heaven or the underworld (Esherick 1987, 39). Mere worship, especially if a person was not engaged in spreading a sect, was either tolerated or treated leniently.

What the Confucians did not permit was the formation of hierarchies of masters and disciplines, or the use of magic that could be instrumental in providing a basis for potential subversive activities. For the most part, the teaching societies accommodated the demands of the Confucians, and some of their leaders were even immortalized in the classic *The Epic Story of Water Margin* (*Shui Hu Zhuan*), a Robin Hood–style novel. These societies became known in the West as secret societies, though there was nothing secret about them. The word *secret* does not appear anywhere in the original Chinese name, as *jiaohui* can be translated as "teaching society" or "religious societies," but the nature of these organization corresponded to secret society in the Western mind, and that justified the interpretive word of *secret*.

The qi-wu played a prominent role in the development of the teaching societies and contributed directly to the Red Eyebrows Uprising (18–27 CE), where they claimed that the local gods spoke against the ruling dynasty. Other societies also drew inspiration from the qi-wu, though by the time of the second century CE when the Yellow Turban[49] teaching society overthrew the Han Dynasty (220 CE), the qi-wu had become more of a mystical religious sect based on popular Daoism.

After the Song (960–1279 CE), the orientation of the jiaohui changed to “faith-based society,” because they promulgated what had been perfectly orthodox Confucian doctrines that were no longer constant with the neo-Confucianism (Bauer 1976, 224). In the new environment, they underwent a mystification that was partly due to the Mongol conquest (1269–1368) and gave rise to the mystical White Lotus Society. The message of the While Lotus centered on the salvation of all true believers when Maitreya[50], the future Buddha, would descend to earth in a time of trouble, marking the end of the current *kalpa* (destiny). In time, this sect began to absorb the popular Daoist repertoire of magical practices—charm incantations and healing rituals—which had wide popular appeal.

Though these societies were, more often than not, banned, in times of crisis, they were in the shadows and constituted an alternative to oppressive orthodox Confucianism. Their prognostic writings had considerable effect on the masses and on the course of Chinese history. Even as late as the civil war[51] of 1945–1949, the Communists used novels like *The Epic Story of Water Margin* and other writings of the White Lotus Society to further their political goals. Even the concept of the Mandate of Heaven was gradually—but increasingly—exploited by these societies.

The Chinese Confucian philosopher Mencius (372–289 BCE) perceptively observed that a period of order was a preface followed by a period of disorder, and the Chinese believed generally that a minor disturbance was to be expected every thirty years and a major one every hundred years. Western scholars described this as “dynastic cycle,” and the Chinese regarded it as a “natural evolution of history” (Hsu 1972, 271). After the Song Dynasty, the Mandate of Heaven was no longer passed on to foreigners, and in case of foreign conquest such as the Mongols, the Mandate became irrelevant or required no discussion. Foreign dynasties were called barbarians rather than “Heavenly Mandate” (Bauer 1976, 225).

Jewish Mystics

In Judaism, the secret learning likewise got its impetus from the disillusionment of the Jews with orthodoxy. Most of the Jews concluded that the Talmudic interpretations went too far, that it was time to go back to the roots, to the Covenant. They could no longer accept the continuous calamities

that befell them; they blamed the oral law (Talmud) for the catastrophes. They disengaged from the reality of everyday life and spent their days in the pursuit of happiness.

For the Jewish mystics, mainstream Judaism was impure, tainted by the Talmud and the sages. Had the Jews remained faithful to the Torah, claimed the mystics, the Jews would have avoided the endless afflictions. They went so far as to declare that Hebrew was the holy tongue, and in its purest form, it reflected the fundamental spiritual nature of the world; in other words, it had mystical value. Hebrew reaches Elohim because it comes from Elohim.

Was it coincidence that followers of the secret learning and the Chinese teaching societies came from similar social backgrounds and had similar purposes? Both societies found support in the ranks of the discontent, the disenchanted, and those who thought that only a return to the ways of the ancients could bring an end to afflictions.

In the pursuit of their goals, the teaching societies blamed outside Western influences that caused decay in traditional morality, and they often resorted to armed conflict. Because of their violent means, they were labeled secret societies, which implied that, at least from an official point of view, they were outlaws. Though their conduct and activities were unmistakably those of secret societies (special hairstyles, colors, code words, mysterious hiding places), they yearned to return to the old ways of the ancient sages.

The teaching societies, like Jewish mysticism, filled a spiritual void lacking in official circles. Institutional changes, they claimed, only widened the gap between the way of the sages and modernization. Confucian orthodoxy was worshipped in name only, and the teaching societies came to the rescue to restore the old system. Areas under their control were governed, at least theoretically, according to the principles set in the canons of the Liji.

Since the so-called secret societies enjoyed popular support, they effectively negated the changes mandated from above, and when the opportunity arose, they contributed to the fall of a dynasty. Thus the Yellow Turbans (second century CE), a very orthodox Confucian teaching society, was directly involved in the downfall of the Han Dynasty in 220 CE. The “Five Pecks of Rice Daoists” were pure Daoists preaching the virtues of the pure living of noninterference, while the Pure Land[52] (*Mi-lie jiaohui*), and White Lotus (*Bai-lian jiaohui*)[53] teaching societies were the driving force against foreigners in China. Their influence extended beyond their times and

impacted subsequent generations and dynasties, not to mention the messianic movement of the *Taipings*, the Heavenly Peace (*Taiping Tianguo*, 1845–1864), which almost toppled the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), and the Boxers in 1900 that rebelled under the banner of throwing out all the foreigners in China.

These were just a few of the teaching societies that were active in China. They shared a common goal with the Jewish mystics: to return to the pure ways of the ancients. The mystics wanted to preserve the purity of Judaism, and the teaching societies wanted to preserve the purity of Confucianism. They also shared a common adversary: both were loathed by the orthodox communities and often persecuted. Jewish leaders excommunicated the mystics, while the Chinese outlawed the secret societies. But these measures had limited effect. The masses flocked to these movements. Jews in the Diaspora inexplicably followed the messianic leaders and immortalized them in stories (Scholem 1971, 349–350). Similarly, the Chinese immortalized the leaders of the teaching societies in novels; they became folk heroes to the common people and scholars alike. These stories and novels greatly impacted the course Jewish and Chinese culture.

The Jews became more solidified after the expulsion from Spain, and they started to question the wisdom of the oral law. Fewer and fewer places admitted them, and many were forced to migrate to the Ottoman Empire, or to isolated places in Eastern Europe. But in those places that admitted them, the creative power of the exiled Spanish Jewry ultimately found expression in new attitudes toward the Jews.

In all settlements, the Jews preserved their leadership and pedigree. In many places from North Africa to Eastern Europe, and in the East, they left their marks on the cultural style of local communities. They established cohesiveness, rebuilt their lives around the synagogue, and were more devoted to the local leadership that was created from the expelled Jews. They took pride in their synagogues and communities, which started to become the focal point of the local Jews. Jewish communities adopted the name of the city in which they lived, and they became identified as the Jews of Salonica, Krakov, Izmir, and so on.

Sometimes these communities were established nearby existing local Jewish communities, and in the course of time, they influenced each other. The mixing of style and ritual enriched both communities, though not without tension. The culture of the Spanish Jewry displayed considerable strength and

in many places came to dominate the local Jewish culture. The Spanish exiles held in low esteem the Jewish surroundings to which they came. The Sephardim, (Spanish-Portugese Jews) ridiculed the relatively low level of cultural achievement of the Ashkenazi (East European) community that absorbed them, while the Ashkenazim criticized the offspring of the Marranos[54] (converted Jews) whose Jewish culture was tainted by Christian culture. Then there was the tension between the Marranos and those who remained loyal to Judaism. The latter group saw the Marranos as having sold out Judaism for their individual benefit.

One immediate consequence of these tensions was the further seclusion of the Jewish communities. Each community retreated into its shell and became an entity of its own, with its own leaders, rabbis, and teachings. It was ideal ground for the development of the secret learning, the Kabbalah. The only common denominator was the uniform attitude of the Jewish mystic toward *hallakha* and *aggadah*, prayers and philosophy.

While mainstream Jews generally believed that the Torah exercised an external force on the Jews, the Kabbalists insisted that, if there was an external force, there must also be an inner soul, which corresponded to historical events but was timeless. *Kabbalah* literally means “tradition” and implies a personal and innate knowledge that, with time, was conceived as traditional wisdom. Some of the remotest communities immersed themselves in mysticism that has been singularly uniform and free from crosscurrents.

Not that mysticism was new to Judaism. Ever since antiquity, the mystic speculators had taught that there was an upper world and an underworld, and they devised elaborate schools that interpreted the Torah in mystical ways. They identified with divinity by forming a mystical union with Elohim, and they always aspired to reach celestial level. They understood the commandments as symbols that were designed by the will of the Creator.

> The intent of the commandments [*mitzvoth*] is to make people believe in Elohim and that they should thank Him for creating us. Men should thank Elohim for the hidden miracles of creation,—that is the basis of the Torah. Man cannot be part of the Torah from Sinai unless he believes with all sincerity that everything is a miracle that was ordained from heaven. (Ziv, Ben-Sasoon, and Landau 1971, 232).

The mystics restricted the transmission of the secret learning to a few individuals who were worthy; they never taught more than one or two at a time (*Mishnah*, Hagigah 2:1; Neusner 1988, 330). They asserted that this limitation was based on the biblical account of the creation (Gen. 13), the laws of prohibited relationships (Leviticus 18), and the description of the chariot-throne in the book of Ezekiel (1:15–18).

In Talmudic times (ca. 300 BCE), these mystics formed an organized fraternity, and they spoke of the ascent of the soul to the Celestial Throne where there was an ecstatic view of the majesty of God and the secrets of His realm (Scholem 1971, 5). From Rabbi Akiba (ca. 174 CE) about whom the Talmud says, "he left the 'Paradise' of mystical speculation safe and sane as he had entered it" (Scholem 1971, 18), to the late Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook[55] the religious leader of the Jewish community in Palestine some 1700 years later (1865–1935), the development of the mystic movement went uninterrupted. It transformed from the mystical Kabbalah, to the messianic movement, and to the Hasidic sect in the eighteenth century, but their ultimate goal was the same.

The Kabbalists maintained that the powers of evil can be brought to an end by the triumph of morality among men through the supremacy of man's spirit over his desires. Students of the Kabbalah regarded prayer as a medium that unites human life with Elohim, the original principle of all beings. The Supreme Being (Elohim) was sacred to the Kabbalists, who dared not pronounce His name; instead, they used *Adonai* or *Elokim*. Incidentally, abstaining from speaking the name of the sacred was also practiced by the Yellow Turban (second century CE) teaching society in China that "dared not pronounce the word *jiao*, even if this should mean death to them" (Bauer 1976, 226).

Little is known of the Kabbalistic personalities. Like their Chinese counterparts, they left us little biographical data about themselves, and frequently their mystical writings are equally mysterious tracts and books from which it is difficult, if not impossible, to form an impression of their personalities.

These new ideas combined a mystical interpretation of exile with an equally mystical theory of the path to redemption: "The old spirit of mystical contemplation was enriched by the new elements of Messianic fervor, with its apocalyptic dream of an end to the period of suffering and degradation" (Scholem 1971, 286).

One of the leaders of the Kabbalistic movement was Joseph Caro (1488–1575), a victim of the 1492 expulsion from Spain, who settled in Sefad and established a yeshiva. He wrote an everyman's version of the Talmud, called the *Shulchan Aruch*, or the Prepared Table. He came to the rescue of Judaism by proclaiming that the Messenger of God, or *maggid*, told him the day of redemption can be hastened with *teshuva*, return, the rededication of the soul to Elohim.

Caro's influence expanded rapidly and with it the dissemination (due to the rapid increase in use of the printing press in 1558) of the *Book of Zohar*, the foremost mystical work of Judaism, which originated in the second century CE. The mystic movement filled a void in the soul of Jewish history, and the *Zohar* was emphatic that "from the year 1540, it is a most choice commandment that old and young should engage therein in public … For in the virtue thereof Messiah the King will be coming, and not in virtue of anything else" (Ben-Sasson 1976, 695).

Then a collective mania swept the Diaspora when Sabbatai Zvi (1626–1676) set aside all reason and exposed himself as the messiah. His vision that the Jews would return to Jerusalem and to the Promised Land, which would be followed by redemption—not in the distant future but in this lifetime—was exactly what the people wanted to hear. "Very large numbers of people were swept by the tide of emotion and underwent the most extravagant form of self-inflicted penance, the like of which never were seen before, nor will be again until the true redemption comes" (Scholem 1971, 288). The new messianic movement spread like a wildfire among the ghetto communities, and within a few short years, most of the Jews in the Diaspora had been exposed to and supported Shabbatai's vision. With the death of Shabbatai Zvi, the messianic movement dissolved, but its legacies were not forgotten.

In the wake of the failure of the messianic movement emerged a revivalist movement called Hasidism, spearheaded by Baal Shem Tov (1700–1760). His teachings were neither messianic nor Mosaic in nature and he urged his follower to sing, dance, and be happy in addition to pray to attain redemption.

> There are those who serve God with their human intellect and others whose gaze is fixed on Nothing…. He who is granted this supreme experience losses the reality of his intellect, but when he returns from

> such contemplation of the intellect, he finds it in full of divine and inflowing splendor. (Scholem 1971, 5)

Hasidism was the only movement that did not seek a return to Israel. It was a totally Diaspora-oriented movement, one that could spread and attract followers, given the right circumstances. Even today, the Hasidim do not recognize the State of Israel.

Thus in a narrow sense, the secret learning in Judaism and the teaching societies in China filled the same spiritual role. On the most basic and simplistic level, both movements emanated from similar sources, prophecies, and visions that forced the people to return to their roots. Members of both movements immersed themselves in the study of the past, and they vowed to find redemption in the glory of their traditions.

But on a deeper level, both messianic societies were bound by an invisible link that depended on the emergence of new spiritual powers. The leaders' visions would materialize in the near future and not "at the end of days." Not only did they believe that they were the messengers of God, other people became convinced of it as well. The leaders of their communities were powerless to counteract them, and ultimately the community leaders were also swept up in the tide. This was a very powerful tool for attracting followers.

The teaching societies proclaimed that based on historical precedents, any ruler who attained the seat of the emperor through unlawful means was doomed to a short-term rule. As a result, they denied the Mongols' claim to the Mandate of Heaven. When scholars and the literati found historical anecdotes that substantiated the claims of the teaching societies, they publicly declared that the Son of Heaven could not conceivably be a non-Chinese.

> A ruler who chooses Emperor Huang of the Qin Dynasty [d. 206 BCE] [56] as his model, he need not be surprised if rebels and robbers fight [him] for the possession of the throne. Alas, the world constantly changes. A successful rebel is called "emperor"; one who fails is just a rebel. (Bauer 1976, 237)

The teaching societies also perpetuated the belief that during a non-Chinese rule, the real power rested in these societies, a sort of government in exile. But in the long run, consolation could only be found in a kind of "inner

emigration” sustained in the name of loyalty, and during a century of Mongol occupation (1279–1368), the Confucians were forced into loyalist activity. They returned in the study of the old school of thought prevalent in the second half of the first century BCE and inadvertently reinvented the notion of change with tradition. Forced to fulfill secondary roles, the literati often ignored the Mongols and instead, insisted on following the way of the Classics, erecting insurmountable barriers to the Mongol rule.

> You must understand that the Cathayans[57] hated the government of the Great Khan, because he set over them Tartar rulers, mostly Saracens, and they could not endure it, since it made them feel that they were no more than slaves. (Latham 1958, 103)

Secret societies punctuated this passive resistance by employing violent means against foreign barbarians. The conquest changed China from a cultured nation to a subject state, and people had to learn to adapt.

But loyalist activities and bookish learning could not restore the empire. A little-known Chinese philosopher, Chen Xianzhang (1428–1500), had warned that such activities and overly zealously bookish learning led to seclusion and ignorance.

> At the source of everything, there is hidden an inexhaustible spring, and one who holds the key to it need not delve into dusty books. One must learn to contemplate, to think out all implications. If one rests in the formless and prizes naturalness, one becomes established in the real. “Be careful in your solitariness” is a saying not far from the truth. Scholars not alert to this fact may miss the Way by a narrow margin. (Chang 1962, 22)

Chen linked the past and the present in time, and the six directions in space, and made them a unity. Based on this theory, he developed an approach that is comparable in attitude and spirit to the Hasidic movement. He viewed daily life as a manifestation of these basic principles. He liked to bathe in the river, enjoyed the breezes among the rain altars, and returned home singing and called his home (family) the “Nest of Happiness” (Chang 1962, 23), the ultimate retreat of joy.

Chen’s simple philosophy, “I stand between heaven and earth, I leave

the myriad of transformations" (Lao 2003, 355), provided the background for his successor, Wang Yangming (1472–1529), to develop his philosophy of the pleasures of the mind (Lao 2003, 355). Chen pioneered the way to sagehood; Wang Yangming made the way broader and magnificent.

Wang Yangming was not a mystic; he was an ardent neo-Confucian who admired the mind of the Song philosopher Zhu Xi. To prove that the mind had mystic powers, he concentrated his mind upon the li of a bamboo for seven days. After failing to discover anything new, one day he suddenly became enlightened and claimed to have gained new understanding of the "investigation of things" that was the main thesis of the Great Learning. He re-examined the old text of the Liji and concluded that sincerity comes before investigation of things—that is to say, morality comes before intellectual curiosity. Contrary to Zhu Xi's pure intellectual approach, Wang's approach was moral, and "to investigate things or affairs is to do good and to remove evil" (Chan 1970, 654).

This concentration on feelings, morality, and self-fulfillment resonated equally with both Jewish mystics and the Chinese teaching societies. They inspired the masses, who otherwise felt disappointed by orthodox Confucianism or mainstream Rabbinic Judaism. Jewish mystics searched for peaceful means to save Judaism, while the teaching societies used violent means to uphold China's moral values.

Within this internal spiritual struggle rested a deep and hidden connection. Both the Jewish mystics and the teaching societies claimed long traceable histories, and both had undergone evolutionary stages where the message of their teaching changed with the circumstances—but the fundamental religious zeal remained the same. Spirituality was their main tool to attract followers, and based on celestial theories, both the Jewish mystics and the jiaohui spread their message among the underprivileged and disenchanted. The underprivileged joined for economic reasons, while the disenchanted joined because they were disillusioned with the "new ways" and searched for a return to the ancient ways.

From the mainstream point of view, mysticism contained exotic theories that stood in the way of mainstream traditionalists. Mainstream traditionalists often regarded the main objective of mystic sects as the desire to make a decent exit from the world. In Judaism, the mystical union with Elohim was a contradiction between life and thought (Scholem 1971, 1). In China, the mystical ways of the teaching societies stood in the way of

Confucian orthodoxy, which regarded them a menace to the established order and was troubled by their religious zeal and blind devotion to the "worship of the father" (the leader) that verged on divinization (Bauer 1976, 231).

The Mystical Writings

Mystical writings of both cultures changed over time along similar tracks. In Judaism, there was little resemblance between the mystical text from the Talmudic period and the Kabbalistic texts of Sefad in the sixteenth century or the Hasidic literature of the modern age.

The principles of Kabbalah were incorporated in a book called *Sefer Ha-Zohar,* or *Book of Splendor,* that first was passed on by oral tradition and later compiled into a book that, for centuries, stood out as an expression of all that was the profoundest and most deeply hidden in the innermost recesses of the Jewish soul. The Zohar can be best described as an encyclopedia of occultism and metaphysical speculation on God, universe and science. It incorporated symbolic thinking and symbolic language into the Kabbalists speculations, and abandoned the ordinary meaning of words to replace letters with numeric values and attributed mystical properties to both letters and numbers. To a Jewish mystic, "the Zohar has helped me remain a Jew … and, when I open the book of *Zohar*, I behold the whole universe" (Scholem 1971, 157).

Such expressions also resonated with the teaching societies (jiaohui) in China, whose writing also changed over time, with their earliest literature differing in style and content from the literature of the fourteenth or nineteenth centuries. They reflected changes in religious, social, and political values—though their attitude toward outsiders was increasingly uncompromising. Unfortunately, very little of their writing has been preserved. Ironically, those writings that have survived were handed down by the same mainstream Confucians who despised and persecuted the teaching societies.

Nevertheless, one common thread that wove through the writings of the teaching societies can be traced back to the Yijing (Book of Changes) and to the earliest Daoist literature: the inner spirits (*shen*), acting in mysterious ways, provided the inner soul to the adherents. "I contain [spiritual]

nourishment, and nothing can harm me" said the Yijing, the Book of Changes (Wilhelm/Baynes, Hex #50).

The teaching society movements had messianic elements, in that they looked to a supreme deliverer who would force the human race from the miseries of its current state and end history as it had been known by instituting the period of Great Peace. "My followers are numerous … I myself will change destiny … by upright behavior and self-control, I will recognize you," says a text from a teaching society in the second century CE (Spence 1966, xxiii). Later, terms like *Heavenly Kingdom*, *Kingdom of Heaven*, and *Ways of the Celestial Masters* were used to indicate that only those who remained faithful would be guided and saved by the celestial savior.

Despite the sharp departure from orthodoxy, reverence for tradition was always deeply rooted in the mystics and teaching societies" whose prognostic writings touched the innermost feelings of the people.

The Mysticism of Shabbatai Zvi and Hong Xiuquan

To illustrate the deep and hidden connection between the Jewish mystics and Chinese teaching societies, we should briefly compare the circumstances to the rise and fall of their leaders. Shabbatai Zvi (1626–1676), the Jewish leader, and Hong Xiuquan (1814–1864), the Chinese leader, lived in a world vastly separated by both time and geography. Hong Xiuquan lived about two hundred years after Shabbatai Zvi and had never heard of his Jewish counterpart, nor was there any reason to believe that he was influenced by Shabbatais's ideas. Hong's ideas, however, emanated from a biblical prophecy that, at a closer look, reveals remarkable similarities between the two leaders.

Shabbatai Zvi was born in Izmir, Turkey, in 1626. At the time, Turkey was ruled by the Ottoman Empire, one of the few governments in the world that offered safe haven to the Jews and welcomed them for their skills and contacts. Shabbatai Zvi in youth had already shown promise in his studies, and at age fifteen he was already knowledgeable in the Talmud and Rabbinic literature. But he was also attracted to the secrets of the Kabbalah. He used to walk outside the city walls with his friends and talk about

mysteries. Gradually, this led him to engage in mysterious activities that he considered fulfilling the needs of his soul. He started to live a simple life, fasting and purifying his body by frequent bathing.

> Increasingly, Shabbatai Zvi became an ascetic, secluding himself and singing messianic songs aloud, full of sorrow and yearning to return to Zion, the Jewish homeland. According to his followers, he suffered some mental illness that caused him extreme mood swings: "he had dark days that were days of sorrow … light days that were days of rest and joy" (Ziv, Ben-Sasoon, and Landau 1971, 465)—or, as scholars diagnosed him,
>
> He alternates between fits of deepest gloom and most uncontrollable exuberance and exaggerated joy. He is pursued by a sense of depression, which leaves him no quiet moment and does not even permit him to read, without his being able to say what is the nature of this sadness, which has come upon him. Thus, he endures it until the depression departs from the spirit, when he returns with great joy to his studies. And for many years he had suffered from this illness, and no doctor has found a remedy for it, but it is one of the sufferings which are inflicted by Heaven. (Scholem 1971, 290–291)

A calamity befell the Jews in 1648, the year in which, according to the *Book of Zohar*, the Jews would be resurrected. Instead of resurrection, rumors circulated of a large-scale massacre of Jews in the Ukraine. Shabbatai Zvi was very disturbed by the news, and he saw it as the calamity that preceded the coming of the messiah. He started hearing voices, and one day he heard the voice of Elohim calling him: "You are the Redeemer of Israel. You are the true and sole redeemer, and there is nobody else who can redeem them" (Na'aman 1967, 478).

This inner voice turned Shabbatai from a mystical dreamer into a political messiah. He discarded the orthodox teaching, and to demonstrate his true resolve, he publicly spoke the name of the Elohim, something that was permitted only to the high priest during Yom Kippur services in the times of the Temple (516 BCE –70 CE). Shabbatai reasoned that the messiah, who was to redeem his people and resurrect the ruins of Jerusalem, was also permitted to pronounce the scriptural name of the Almighty.

This enraged Shabbatai's teacher and the leaders of his Jewish

community, and they excommunicated him. Shabbatai was forced to leave Turkey and started a journey that took him to Palestine, where he met a prophet named Nathan of Gaza (d. 1681). Nathan immediately recognized in Shabbatai the qualities of a messiah, and on May 31, 1665, he publicly acknowledged Shabbatai as the messiah. With this proclamation, Nathan set in motion the messianic train of events.

Though Shabbatai's active role of a messiah lasted for only one year, [58] his message struck a chord with Jews all over the Diaspora. It started in 1666, a year that was of a major significance to both the Christians the Jews. The Christians calculated that "it will be the year of blessing for the Jews; they will either convert to Christianity or resurrect in Israel" (Dubnov 1956, #43). It was to be the year of the second coming of Jesus, a reference to the biblical prophecy of Paul: "Because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed" (Acts 17:31). But for the Jews, it was the beginning of the "middle kingdom" prophecy of Isaiah:

> For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called "Wonderful Councellor, Mighty Elohim, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of Elohim of hosts will do this. (Isa. 9:6–7)

This was a clear reference to the coming of the messiah, who would sit on the throne of David, and a promise that the covenant with David would be kept by Elohim of hosts.[59] Shabbatai Zvi convinced his followers that he was sitting on the throne of David,[60] and many Jews saw in him a prophecy come true: "I will send you Eli'jah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes" (Mal. 4:5).

Shabbatai Zvi first challenged the rabbinic establishment by speaking the name of Elohim in the same fashion as it used to be spoken during the Temple period. This was a grave transgression, and he was excommunicated for it. His next challenge proclaimed that he was the messiah. Though some rabbis tried to contain him, his prophecy awakened the people and provided them a hope for return. People yearned to hear that the messiah had come.

His followers were ascetics; they flocked to the synagogues to confess their sins, contributed to charities, and returned to the study of the Torah.

Some sages supported Shabbatai's movement because it caused people to return to the synagogues, and because there was no contradiction between *teshuva* (return) and joy. Shabbatai Zvi showed the Jews how to take the heavy burden of the Diaspora off their consciousness. The Jewish inner consciousness became liberated, and individuals felt free from guilt and subjugation.

The feeling of freedom also caused people to ponder the essence of the Torah and future laws. Shabbatai instilled hope in the consciousness of the people. After all, what was the purpose of "[plowing] with an ox and ass together" (Deut. 22:10)? They were meaningless in paradise.

The commandments contained many internal and spiritual meanings, but when the messiah came, the internal meaning of the commandment would be revealed, and everybody would follow the true commandments. Shabbatai acted as a messiah, and due to his extreme mood swings, he issued new laws and cancelled others, while omitting or changing old laws, and instituted new fasting days while canceling others. His actions were sometimes in contradiction to the Torah, but his followers believed in him because, as messiah, he was the one who could do that.

About two hundred years later, China experienced a similar phenomenon that coincidentally also was rooted in biblical prophecy. Hong Xiuquan was born in 1814 in Huaxian, some thirty miles northeast of Canton, a place that was far away from the reach of the central government in Beijing but close enough to be the center of strong foreign influences in China. His Hakka family had strong ties to anti-Manchu,[61] teaching societies. He was short-tempered, domineering, and irritable but showed promise in learning. He took the examinations four times—in 1828, 1836, 1837, and 1843—and each time he failed.

In 1837, after he failed the examination, he became so distressed that he fell seriously ill. In his delirium, he saw a vision in which he was cleansed by the Heavenly Mother, who told him: "My son, you are filthy after your descent upon earth. Let your Mother wash you in the river before you are permitted to see your Father" (Hsu 1972, 276). His delirium and vision went on intermittently for forty days, and no doctor or sorcerer could cure him.

During his illness, Hong had a dream that he was the True Lord

sitting reclined on a sedan chair, in a big mansion—a veritable place. There he saw a venerable old man with a golden beard and a black robe, who gave him a sword to exterminate demons and a seal to overcome evil spirits. He ordered Hong to go to the world below to stamp out demons and save all mankind, all his brothers and sisters. Hong also saw a tall scholar who claimed to be his elder brother who also urged the destruction of demons and promised to assist Hong in destroying them (Li 1967, 54).

During the period of his illness, Hong often sang, announcing that he was the Heavenly King and Emperor of the Great Way. The villagers considered him insane. When Hong related his dream to a Chinese Christian named Liang A-fa (1789–1855), A-fa gave him the book *Quanshi Liangyan* (Good Words to Exalt the Age), which consisted of A-fa's rudimentary translation of the Bible, full of strange stories and terms and even stranger names.

But the book contained details that seemed to fit the realities in southern China. When Hong read the book, he had no way of knowing that it contained a Christian interpretation of the biblical stories adjusted to fit the realities of China. Thus he was led to believe that the man with the golden beard was God, (*Yehouhua*) the creator of heaven and earth, and that Hong's elder brother was Jesus the Savior, and "since Jesus was the Son of God and also Hong's elder brother, then he was God's Chinese son" (Spence 1966, 65).

The book further explained that the names mentioned (Mount Sinai, Zion, Israel, Moses, Isaiah, etc.) were associated with places and people in antiquity who would not listen to divine instructions and "slowly, one by one, died in the desert, often with great suffering" (Spence 1966, 61). Thus, Hong believed that he had found confirmation in the Bible for his visionary hallucinations and that God had conferred on him a divine liberating mission.

Surrounded by a small group of followers, Hong established the "Worshippers of Shangdi Teaching Society" (*Bai Shangdijiao*) and adopted the Ten Commandments, monotheism, and messianic missions as its doctrines. While examining these doctrines, I could not shake the feeling that they were closer to the militant aspect of the Torah than to the gospels of Christianity.[62]

The similar pronunciation of the words *Jesus* and *Isaiah* in Chinese could have confused Hong and led him to believe that Jesus and Isaiah were the same person. But there is no mistake that the words of the foreign sage or

scholar in his dream were those of the prophet Isaiah (in A-fa's Chinese version):

> Why should you be stricken any more? You will revolt more and more: the whole earth is sick, and the whole heart faint. … Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire, your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. … And the destruction of the transgressors and of all sinners shall be together and they who forsake the Lord shall be consumed. For you shall be ashamed of the oaks in which you have desired; and you shall be confounded for the gardens that you have chosen. For you shall be like an oak whose leaf faded, and like a garden without water. And the strong shall be as fibers of hemp, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them. (Isaiah 1:5–8, 28–31; Spence 1966, 55–56)

The utter destruction and burning originally referred to the destruction of Jerusalem (586 BCE) and was foreseen by the Jewish prophet Isaiah (seventh century BCE). Hong had also foreseen in his dream a similar incident that would occur in the near future. On February 27, 1841, the British captured and set fire to a Chinese ship, and when the flames reached the magazine and the ship exploded, the sound could be heard for thirty miles (Spence 1966, 56). Hong was very moved by this vision, and he started to see that his hour had arrived and called himself the new Jesus.

Hong first challenged the established Qing rulers accusing them of being non-Chinese. In a show of defiance, his followers kept their hair long in protest against the Manchu laws forcing the Chinese people to shave their foreheads as a sign of loyalty. The Manchu called Hong and his followers the "Long Hair Bandits" (*changmao zui*), but for the Chinese it was a natural expression of freedom.

Hong also insisted on using a language that was simple, as opposed to the cumbersome classical style of the court. It was unclear whether his language choice derived from the biblical prophecy of Ezekiel: "for you are not sent to a people of foreign speech and a hard language … whose words you cannot understand … But the house of Israel will not listen to you" (Ezek. 3:5, 7). But since A-fa adamantly taught that Israel was extinct, Hong understood that this prophecy referred to China and the ruling Manchu. He

used word plays, rhymed riddles, or recited poems and songs with hidden religious or political meanings. He yearned to return to the native Chinese rule under the Ming (1369–1644).

Then Hong challenged the "pseudo-Confucians" who pretended to follow the old ways but in reality sought personal glorification and fame. He claimed that the true Confucians were those who combined the mystic experience with the beliefs of the teaching societies, particularly the *Hong-men,* (Hong society) and the *Santianhui* (Triad society) of the Ming. To show affinity with these groups, the Hong decreed that his followers should wear a red cloth wrapped around their heads.

A careful comparison of Hong's vision with that of Shabbatai Zvi confirms that both dreams emanated from the same biblical source. The Heavenly Mother in Hong's dream was the ever-protective Divine Presence (Shekhina) who extended her protection to the place and people wherever she established her dwelling. Being washed, prior to being presented to his Father also originated with the prophet Isaiah: "When you come to appear before me … wash yourself; make yourself clean; remove the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil" (Isa. 1:12–17).

While Hong was led to believe that the scholar in his dream was Jesus, the biblical text pointed to the book of Isaiah. This inconsistency was settled by Liang Shuming (1893–1988), a noted Confucian scholar and a long-time friend (and adversary) of Mao Zedong, who made a point of reminding the Chinese that "Israelite thought [as opposed to Hellenism] came from the East, and I suspect that it might have had some distant connections with India" (Alitto 1979, 89). In other words, modern Chinese thinkers like to point out that Indian, Israelite, and Chinese thoughts originated in the East, and they had more in common than previously thought.

Despite the distortions of biblical stories, A-fa's reiteration of the Christian doctrine that bliss at the end of days would eliminate evil in a "day of wrath and destruction" contradicted the Chinese view of good and evil. Chinese bliss revolved around the principles of yin and yang, that two equal forces move in opposite direction but complement each other. Eliminating one of the forces would unbalance the equation. In other words, good and evil are inseparable. This belief was unshakable in China, and Hong was no exception. He believed, as Shabbatai Zvi did, that to despair of the future is one of the gravest of all sins, because the perfect age, the Golden Age, for which everyone must work, still lies before us. Steadfastness would

ultimately receive its reward in this world, and a state of perfection would ultimately be attained in this world.

Hong was convinced that the "the hope in pursuit of happiness and long life was to occur in the near future, and he was the deliverer" (*Taiping Tianguo*, no date, 39), and he possessed the unshakable belief that God's kingdom could be realized on earth. Hong followed his instincts, which had more in common with the Jewish messiah than with Christianity. The latter emphasized the afterworld, while the Chinese (and Jews) emphasized the world on earth in the foreseeable future.

Although Hong believed that he was the incarnation of Jesus, and his "Worshippers of Shangdi Teaching Society" (*Bai Shangdijiao*) was modeled on the Christian blueprint, his values were anything but Christian. His arbitrary edicts canceling traditional Confucian practices, his proclamations concerning land distribution, common property and the treatment of women, and his claim that all men were brothers and equals mimicked the true Jewish messianic ideology. In Judaism, with the coming of the messiah, people will be equal, all Jews will be gathered in the Promised Land, and heavenly peace will descend upon the world.

The message of the mystics was simple and effective; it appealed to both the sages and the common people, and deeply influenced Jewish and Chinese cultures. On an unconscious level, both the Jews and the Chinese were ready to return to the simplistic life of antiquity, unburdened by rules and regulations. People felt liberated and unburdened, and they felt free to inquire into their ancient canons without the many cumbersome interpretations of orthodoxy. Both Shabbatai Zvi and Hong Xiuquan emphasized that it was not their written canons that shaped Judaism and China but the Jews that shaped Torah and the Chinese people that shaped the Classics. Time for change to end all suffering was in the air; people could almost touch it.

On the subconscious level, the masses flocked to the simplicity of salvation through joy and a carefree attitude. They were ready to accept a simpler religion comprised of a new movement, which tried to exalt the spirit. When Shabbatai Zvi and Hong Xiuquan occupied center stage, they talked about the unexpressed feelings, the subdued and twisted souls of the deprived and underprivileged. The Jews were at the mercy of the Church and local rulers, while China was at the mercy of the foreign invaders who relegated the Chinese to the status of second-class citizens.

People under such conditions were full of dogma without feelings, and by exploiting the natural tendencies of the masses, both movements gained massive numbers of followers. Shabbatai Zvi declared himself the messiah and promised to raise an army to resurrect the ruins of Jerusalem. He failed. Hong Xiuquan declared himself the Son of God and promised to build the Kingdom of Heaven (*Tianguo*) to bring great peace to the empire. He also failed.

But through failure they achieved more than they might have through success. At the height of their popularity, they showed that there was another way to salvation. But just when that salvation seemed to be within reach, both leaders disappeared from the stage. Shabbatai Zvi converted to Islam to evade the death penalty, while Hong Xiuquan was crushed by the Qing army. But the movement that Shabbatai Zvi established continued for several centuries, and, oddly enough, it was resurrected in China two hundred years later, basically continuing where he had left off.

Shabbatai left the historical stage with his mission unaccomplished: he failed to raise an army and failed to retake Jerusalem. Hong entered the historical stage and accomplished what his Jewish counterpart failed to do: he raised an army and established a country with the capital at the old imperial city of Nanjing. In this sense, the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864) completed the celestial will that started with Shabbatai Zvi and ended with the fall of Hong Xiuquan. Their spiritual legacies, however, were immeasurable and not easily forgotten.

On the conscious level, the messianic movements led to the disintegration of the old system, which was replaced by new ideas. In Judaism, it was the first time that mystical ideas led directly to the disintegration of the believers in Orthodox Judaism. Hasidism was the direct outcome of the failed messianic movement; it affirmed the Jewish spirit without the tradition. It encouraged a mood of religious anarchism on a mystical basis, which, when it coincided with favorable external circumstances, played a highly important part in creating a moral and intellectual atmosphere favorable to the Jewish reform movement of the nineteenth century (Scholem 1971, 299). It affected directly the development of secular literature that dealt with nature, life, and the individual. In addition, it opened the way to more philosophical writing that re-examined the ghetto mentality and questioned the relationship between the Jews and the Covenant.

In China, the Taiping had contributed to the fall of orthodoxy and hastened the opening of China. It weakened the grip of the orthodox Confucian on power and allowed new ideas to spread at a rapid pace. Provincial officials shed their dependence on the court and acted independently of the central government. They questioned the wisdom of isolation and supported the import of Western idea and technology.

The Jewish and Chinese messianic movements are considered forerunners of modern religious transformation and revolution. Shabbatai Zvi revolutionized the orthodox community and provided the background for secular education and literature. Hong Xiuquan's movement "was neither a purely Chinese nor a purely Western movement; it was a strange light in confusion—lustrous and dazzling" (Wang 1969, 255), but he exposed the weakness of the traditional system and was an inspiration to later revolutionaries.

Chapter 7: The Reformers

The Haskala and the New Cultural Movement

Jewish and Chinese history in modern times has completed a full circle in reverse order: the Jews, from losing their country in antiquity to persecutions to emancipation and back to regaining their country; China, from unification in antiquity to fall under foreign rule to forced concessions to regaining their independent status. In the process, the Jews were at the center of world affairs while China was at the periphery. Yet all this time they both remained faithful to their scriptures.

But by the mid-nineteenth century, the lofty ideals of the Torah, with its prophecies and visions, and the Liji—concerned with country and government—came under intense scrutiny. Both Jewish and Chinese intellectuals concluded independently that the way of life of antiquity did not meet the demands of modern times, and unless radical changes were implemented, their culture would become relics of the past.

Already in the late eighteenth century, a small group of *maskilim*, Jewish intellectuals, called for a complete break with tradition and urged the Jews to integrate into local society. But as the wave of anti-Jewish sentiment grew, another group of *maskilim* went further and called for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

China went through a similar phase. A group of young and educated Chinese, exposed to Western ideas, called for a gradual modernization of Chinese culture. They pointed to the humiliating barbarian occupation of the Manchu[63] and to China's impotence against Western military technology as examples of the country's backwardness. They demanded that China take measures to protect herself; otherwise she might become a Western colony. They were the *avant-garde* of *zhishi fenzi*, intellectuals, who like the Jewish maskilim, borrowed some ideas from the West and called for reconciliation between the old system and the modern world. They reinterpreted the Liji to show that there were precedents for such reconciliation.

Another wave of Western-educated *zhishi fenzi*, intellectuals, went further and called for a complete break with the past. They called for the establishment of a new China. Though these events may appear unrelated, a

closer examination reveals that both Judaism and China drew inspiration from the same spiritual and scriptural wells.

Following the failed messianic movements, both the Jews and China returned to their roots. The Jews increased their opposition to secular scientific thinking and literature, and refused to admit that the rituals they practiced were merely rote memorizations without spiritual connotation. Not until Mendelssohn[64] (1729–1786) publicly declared that there was no contradiction between religious belief and critical reason, did the Jews reach a turning point. He showed by his example that despite all adversity, a Jew could have a thorough knowledge of modern culture and converse on equal terms with the shining lights of contemporary Europe (Laqueur 1972, 7).

But few individuals turned to the study of humanism, of secular men in the modern world. The emphasis was on the importance of practical knowledge with well-balanced economic activity, which ultimately touched off an intellectual revolution historically referred as *haskala*, enlightenment. The haskala movement established as its most important goal the social and cultural integration of the Jews in their surroundings as full-fledged members of the universal brotherhood. “Be a man in the outside world and a Jew at home” wrote I. L Gordon [65](1830–1892) in a poem that became the motto of the Haskala (Urinovsky 1962, 1:202).

Traditionally among Jews, manual labor was regarded as a mark of social disgrace, and modern innovations were met with furious resistance: how could the work of man measure against the Torah? The maskilim felt that practical subjects (e.g., agriculture) would redeem the moral character of the Jews and contribute to their economic well-being. The Haskala commenced with opening schools that “Westernized” Jewish education and taught secular subjects popular with European societies.

Jewish maskilim earnestly believed that secular education would endow all Jews with greater dignity, greater “poise,” vis-à-vis their non-Jewish neighbors. To achieve this, they underwent profound social, cultural, moral, intellectual, and religious changes that led many Jews away from core Judaism. Jewish scholarship often degenerated into abysmal scholasticism. The maskilim still went to the synagogue and respected the dignity of the rituals, though they only did that out of habit. During services, they recited the prayers mechanically and engaged in social conversation. Hebrew was restricted to a few prayers and to some colloquial phrases, and even scholars used the language sparingly.

Most early maskilim were admirers of Germany and its rich cultural heritage. In all fairness, this admiration encompassed outward manifestations like dress, decorum, technology, science, etc., but the maskilim never contemplated Germanizing themselves spiritually, emotionally, or religiously (Sachar 1958, 202–203).

The Chinese enlightenment movement began in 1895 with a large-scale effort to adopt Western secular learning, called New Learning, *xinxue*, and twenty-four years later it evolved into the New Culture, *xinwenhua*. The new learning, xinxue, was directed at the inherited political order and sought to bring about changes within the existing system.

The early reformers in China did not feel that a complete departure from tradition was possible or desirable, so they advocated restoring the old system and gradually absorbing new ideas. At first, they adamantly rejected ideas that were not Chinese in origin and limited interaction with outsiders. Though they effortlessly deflected the inroads made by missionaries, the Chinese intelligentsia concluded that resistance to Western military superiority was futile.

Increasing Western influence posed a challenge to both China and Judaism. The problem for the former was how to absorb new ideas without losing Chinese identity; for the latter, the issue was how to combat anti-Semitism. Western military superiority reduced China to a semi-independent status with a subservient role vis-à-vis the West. In addition, political instability and internal unrest contributed to the total collapse of the imperial system and the loss of the Mandate of Heaven. Even “the second blossoming,” or the Tongzhi Restoration, in the 1860s and 1870s, a futile attempt to restore the traditional order through reaffirmation of the old morality and the application of knowledge to practical affairs (*jingshi zhiyoung*), could not suppress the fermenting social upheaval that lay beneath the surface (Hsu 1972, 317–318).

But the few Chinese who had been exposed to Western learning concluded that the roots of Western strength were more than just superficial technological and scientific knowledge, and for China to gain respect among nations, cosmetic changes were insufficient. The question they faced was how best to unite the government and the people, the rulers and the ruled, into a cohesive nation. Was unity to come from above, through moral leadership, as advocated by the traditionalists, or through new institutions that would give people more say in the running of the country, as advocated

by the Western-educated intellectuals?

The latter implied a system that ran contrary to the Confucian tradition. At the same time, it would introduce a concept that would have been new to China: equality, as opposed to hierarchy.

This became a focal point that was not addressed in the Liji, but it was addressed in the Torah. In Judaism, each individual was equal before the Law, while in China, the lack of equality was embedded in thousands of years of tradition. The hierarchical social structure was what kept China afloat, and the lack of it had kept the Jews cohesive.

Now the Chinese faced the same dilemma that the Jews had faced in antiquity: should they abolish the traditional social hierarchy and replace it with social equality? The survival of China as a nation was at stake. Most of the early Chinese intellectuals were admirers of Western cultures but were not yet ready to discard the old institutions and call for radical changes. They believed that China should gradually adapt to the outside world, and for the time being, with minor adjustments, both the monarchy and the integrity of the current system could be preserved. To augment their argument, they quoted from Mencius, who said that, "Those who are governed by others are fed by the people, and those who govern others feed the people"[66] (*Mencius*, Bk. III, 1, iv, 6; Legge 1974, 249–250).

This particular notion struck a chord in Judaism. The Jews in the Diaspora supported other kingdoms but never their own. The Torah neglected to mention that unless the Israelites regained their country, they would "feed and be fed by others." The Jews waited too long to reclaim their country, and in the meantime, a negative stereotype of the Jews became embedded in the minds of non-Jewish communities.

The relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish communities deteriorated to the point that individual Jews undertook to try to find a solution on their own. There were always individual Jews who went the path of leaving their community—and the means to do so was to convert to Christianity.

Once the shock of the expulsion from Spain in 1492 wore off,[67] many Spanish Jews concluded that the way of conversion was the right way. The anti-Jewish laws were severe enough to completely segregate the Jews and prevent them from taking an active role in society. Once they converted, they were eligible for jobs in government and universities, the most desired

positions at the time.

Even with the emancipation of the Jews and their access to equal rights upon conversion, they faced serious obstacles. The Church was suspicious of the motives of the converts, and their influence on the state prevented the converts a smooth transition. By converting, some hoped to evade the Church's scrutiny altogether. They publicly declared their allegiance to the new religion and saw conversion as an "entry ticket" to the European society. To show their affinity with Christianity, they called their former Jewish community a "historical mistake," a remnant of the ancient world. They did not believe in the continuity of Judaism, gave up hope of rectifying and modernizing it, and felt trapped within Judaism. The Jewish legacy that each of them was born with direct access to Elohim was, in their opinion, a fault of substance; they called Judaism "not religion but a disaster," and they sought ways to fix it.

In this respect, the social problems were harsher than the ideological ones. The converts knew that Judaism was struggling, but they still abandoned their Jewish faith and went out of their way to denounce their native religion. The converts were regarded with disdain by the Jewish communities and were often called deserters and traitors. The Christians regarded the converts as opportunists, devoid of values and integrity. The converts were just trying to ease their social standing and demand equal rights, honorable occupations, and status in their new society. The Christians called their actions "typical Jewish" *chutzpah* (Jewish audacity).

In many instances, the Jewish traits of the converts were more pronounced and outstanding. Though they had consciously converted to Christianity, unconsciously, many converts still recited the *Shema* (Deut. 6:4) [68] and performed some of the most basic Jewish rites. A convert was uprooted from one society but was not accepted in the other. Many of them reacted by becoming radicalized, harshly criticizing the ideal social systems.

There were converts who rejected their Jewish roots not because of social pressures but because they objected to the Jewish way of life and its traditions. These people not only sought to free themselves from Judaism, they also sought vengeance against it. They went so far as to warn the world of Jewish domination. These Jews pretended to be at such odds with Judaism that they preferred to lose their Jewish roots even if they were not firmly accepted by the Christians. They were caught between the two religions: one that they had left and could not go back to, and the other that they aspired to

but which did not accept them.

> Complete return was not possible; what was possible, however, was for them to start looking at Judaism from a different perspective. In re-examining the calamities that had befallen the Jews, the converts reached the conclusion that the Jews needed to find a country of their own. Had the Jews been able to read the Chinese Classics, they would have agreed with Mencius (372–289 BCE) that, "The [true] Dao is when the sages work the fields and share equally the fruits of their labor with the people" (Legge 1974, 247). This conclusion of the converts was the beginning of the nationalistic sentiment that gave rise to Zionism (Ziv, Ben-Sasoon, and Landau 1971, 3:326).

But from a nationalistic point of view, these Jews constituted a group of strangers in their native countries. They were stateless citizens and therefore not under any international legal protection. Each community enjoyed autonomy in public and spiritual life, and for a bystander, it was difficult to separate religion from the Jews. Some if not most of the outsiders thought that the Jewish communal autonomy was based on religion and not on a self-governed entity. They could not tell if the community was governed by laws or just by rituals and religious leaders.

This caused a split in the definition of the Jewish community. There were those who thought that the Jews were a nation of their own that survived on the hope that in the future the messiah would come. Then there were those who thought that the Jews were a religious entity and that, given the right circumstances, they could become a nation. The old pillars of autonomy started to crumble when the "enlightened rulers" came to see Jewish autonomy as a revolt against the monarchy (Dubnov 1956, 731). The Torah did not deal with this question, and the Jews went into a frenzy searching for solutions.

After 150 years of peace and prosperity, by the mid-nineteenth century, both natural and man-made calamities struck China. According to the "divinations," a cyclical phenomenon of "natural evolution" was due, and the events pointed to the weakening of the Mandate of Heaven. Shangdi was displeased with the divine spirits of the Mandate of Heaven. Chinese scholars pointed out that the conditions in the mid-nineteenth century emulated the conditions prior to the fall of the Shang Dynasty in 1066 BCE, when natural disasters, combined with social unrest, caused the emperor to lose the

Mandate.

In 1849, the Yellow River flooded, and in 1852, it shifted course, flooding the northern lowlands, causing devastating loss of lives and property. The draught in Henan Province in 1874 was blamed on the inability of the emperor to appease the spirits of the sage ancestors. In addition, internal pressure on the Qing rulers, who were foreign occupiers, mounted. Commencing with the violent opening of China and the subsequent Opium Wars (1839–1842 and 1856–1860), culminating with the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864), which encompassed over sixteen provinces and destroyed more than six hundred cities, China was at the brink of collapse.

Exacerbated by local uprisings—the Nien Rebellion (1851–1868), the Muslim Rebellion (1855–1873), the Dungan Rebellion (1862–1878) in the Northwest, and the Boxer Rebellion in 1900—the imperial treasury was depleted of both financial and military resources. Though the Manchu were able to crush the domestic rebellions, they could not change the perception that the natural calamities were heaven sent.

Additionally, the imperial system's inability to expel the Western powers was seen as further proof that the Mandate was on the verge of collapse. China, who had considered the barbarians inferior, unexpectedly faced a strong West that demanded equal treatment. This was inconceivable; the Liji abhorred equality with non-Chinese unless they sinocized. Had the Chinese been able to read the Old Testament, they would have agreed with the prophet Isaiah: "There shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a twig shall grow forth out of his roots" (Isa. 11:1). This was the end of the Mandate of Heaven and the beginning of the preordained finale.

By 1894, a small group of Chinese officials realized that the foreigners they were facing did not fit the image of the barbarians in antiquity. However, this faction was a small minority. They were harshly criticized by the majority, who had neither encountered nor been exposed to the modern foreign technical superiority. This majority still clung to the belief that all barbarians were the same and China still was the center of the universe. An orthodox scholar, who accused the reformers of imitating Confucius outwardly but following the barbarians in their mind, captured this sentiment in a letter to one of his students:

> Nowadays progressive scholars are trying to break the boundary line between barbarian and Chinese and to combine the civilizations of

> China with that of foreign countries; but I can never agree with them. … If they say that there should be no distinction between the Chinese and the foreigners, can they also say that there is no east and west? … Westerners have distinguished the Chinese as a yellow race, which implies that from the beginning, when heaven and earth were created, the Chinese were given a central position. When Westerners laugh at Chinese egotism, why can we not explain it by this reasoning? … The civilization of Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, and Wu was inherited by the Duke of Zhou and enlarged by Confucius. Since the three Dynasties, the civilization of our sages has conquered or absorbed innumerable alien cultures. … Buddhism was popular in the period of the Six Dynasties [221–588 CE], and yet the Sanskrit Buddhist sutras were spread and handed down through the medium of Chinese. The Khitan, Jurchen, and Mongol invaded and ravaged the kingdom of the Song Dynasty [960–1279], and yet there is not a single work left in these alien languages. … The powerful and intangible influence of our sages can absorb cultures without, undoubtedly, these books, which were written in illegible horizontal lines.
>
> … When strong neighbors infringe upon us, their criticism of us is by no means reliable. Had France been defeated and China victorious in the war of 1884, China would have been considered more civilized; when China was defeated and Japan was successful in the war of 1894, then China was despised as a semi-civilized nation. Such criticism … is hardly worthy of attention. Just as silkworms eat mulberry leaves, foreigners treat a weak nation like a piece of meat to be eaten or like prey to be swallowed by whales. It is no surprise that they, being of an alien race, are hostile to us. I am surprised, however, at our own progressive scholars who seem to enjoy our misfortune and agree with the foreigners. Such scholars disregard the fact that their grandfathers and fathers were subjects and officials of China, and that their sons and grandsons will be Chinese citizens. How can we determine the reason for this attitude? (Li 1967, 165)

Until the end of the nineteenth century, many Confucian reformers believed that the solution to China's problems rested in the authentic texts of the past. They, like their Jewish counterparts, grappled with the scriptures that supposedly contained the recipe for averting disaster, but in reality they

dealt their past a deathblow.

And the Chinese reformers—unlike the Jews, who had conscientiously stripped the tenets of the Torah from Zionism—claimed that Confucianism and Chinese characteristics were tainted by Western thought. Even when they proclaimed their goal to save the real Confucian qi, essence, by "applying" (*yong*) borrowed technology from the West, their ideals were not Confucian values in Western guise but Western ideas in Confucian garb. These ideas were frequently misunderstood and distorted, and the many blends of Western and Chinese ideas, ranging from admiration to skepticism, resignation to hope, dominated Chinese nationalism until 1935. Out of these movements emerged a new breed of intellectuals who sought to modernize Judaism and China.

The New Intellectuals: The Maskilim and the Zhishi Fenzi

The *Haskala* and the New Cultural Movement were the corresponding Jewish and Chinese enlightenment movements, headed by a minority of intellectuals called *maskilim* in Hebrew and *zhishi fenzi* in Chinese. Haskala is a Hebrew word meaning "awakening" or "rebirth" and expressed the cultural nationalism of the Jews. It was the Jewish Renaissance arriving three hundred years late.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the maskilim had realized what the Torah had said all along—that conversion from Judaism did not bring the desired results. Despite converting to Christianity, many converted Jews were still singled out and subjected to the special anti-Jewish laws. From then on, only those with strong ambitions to overcome their Jewish roots converted; the majority remained in the sphere of Judaism.

Influenced by the European Renaissance, a small minority of maskilim made their appearance in the Pale of Settlement[69] and in the *shtetl*[70]. They were thinkers and writers, educated in the secular as well as the Jewish tradition that made a profound and enduring impact on the life and times of their people and its civilization. Focusing on the basic tenets of

Judaism, they set out to prove that the truth of divine revelation could be demonstrated by reason and that the Jewish tradition could be justified in this fashion.

The maskilim used both Hebrew and local languages, especially German, to convey their message. In Hebrew publications, the maskilim maintained a moderate tone, but in the German editions, they were anti-traditional and even deistic. Negation of the Talmud and the mitzvoth was almost universal; the declared ideal was “pure Mosaic” or “natural religion” (Ben-Sasson 1976, 784). Loyalty to the Talmudic tradition and the observance of the mitzvoth separated the Jews from their neighbors and prevented them from fulfilling their obligations as citizens of the state. “I plead with you, leaders of the people, accept the voice of one who loves his people and his faith,” declared an article in the journal *Ha-Meliz* (Sachar 1958, 209).

The majority of the maskilim, however, did not go this far. Though they still criticized Judaism and suggested proposals to advance reforms, they interpreted the Jewish messianic aspirations in universal terms and envisioned a future based on the principles of reason, liberty, and fraternity. But even the mildest reforms were met with fierce opposition from rabbinical authorities.

The situation ultimately degenerated into mistrust between the established orthodox system and the maskilim. The latter concluded that it was impossible to influence the Jews from within. On the one hand, the maskilim continued to publish philosophical works in the rationalist spirit. They endeavored to disseminate knowledge of history and science, and criticized both the traditionalists and the unconcerned within the Jewish community. But on the other hand, they approached secular authorities with plans to alter the Jewish way of life (Ben-Sasson 1976, 784).

By way of example, the maskilim started to identify with the country and nation in which they lived. Why should the Jews be different from the rest of the world? Why continue to dwell on the past instead of the present? Some maskilim went further. They diverged from the customary scriptural topics and wrote about the individual in daily life, serving the community. Detailed descriptions of episodes, adventures, feelings, and daily life that were not expressed in Talmudic literature found their way into the Haskala writing. These writings were tendentious, confrontational, and propagandist, and they veiled the truth. They centered on the social aspect of Judaism and

reflected the “new text,” or the “creative house” for the spirit of nationalism (Urinovsky 1962, 2:6).

Even though the maskilim cut their ties with traditional Judaism, they associated with ideas that were in contrast to the dictatorial rule of the absolute monarch. They advocated labor unions; they were socially oriented and demanded equal rights for workers. These ideas pushed the maskilim back to a special class, and they faced the dilemma of a split between their loyalty to the nation and their belonging to the Jewish race. Though loyalty to the nation led in certain cases to citizenship, the maskilim found out that they still were required to declare their Jewishness and be subject to the special Jewish laws. It shocked them that even after declaring themselves as non-Jews and cutting all ties to Judaism, they were still treated as Jews.

A more radical group of maskilim emerged to demand equal rights not only on paper but in practice, too. Based on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity of the French Revolution (1789), the radical wing made a fundamental declaration and founded the Alliance Israelite Universelle. “In 1860 a group of Jews convened in Paris and appealed to the world Jewry to organize a world wide alliance with the aim of defending the Jewish honor, encouraging physical labor, opposing ignorance and prejudice, striving towards Jewish emancipation and its consolidation through the moral and spiritual improvement of the Jews” (Ben-Sasson 1976, 849-850). They called on those Jews who

> believe that the influence of the principles of 1789 are still strong in the world; and that the laws based on these principles are just laws that deserve to be spread to every possible place; and that an example of a nation that enjoy complete religious freedom is a powerful inspiration. If you [Jews] all over the world believe in this—answer our call (Ziv, Ben-Sasoon, and Landau 1971, 329).

Hence the slogan “all Israel are brothers.”[71]

Such a call was quite familiar in China, too. “When people are respectful and observe propriety, then *all within the four seas are brothers*,”[72] said Confucius (Analects XII, v. 4. Legge 1975, 253), and by the end of the nineteenth century, the Chinese intellectuals, zhishi fenzi, were appealing to the masses to drive out the foreigners, including the ruling

Manchu. The zhishi fenzi called for drastic measures to save China. Blaming outsiders for China's weakness, they claimed that the traditionalists only treated the symptoms, whereas the root cause lay in the entire social infrastructure—which required a complete overhaul, from top to bottom.

Just like the Jewish maskilim who questioned the usefulness of continuing the old Talmudic tradition and deemed it futile, the Chinese zhishi fenzi sought to abolish the learning of the Classics and replace them with "new learning" and a new system that benefited the society over the individual. Hushi wrote in 1914:

> Under our family system the father and mother regard the son and his wife as a kind of old-age pension … All branches of the family are mutually dependent on one another … the individual should feel responsible only to "society" as a whole and act accordingly. (Grieder 1970, 102–103)

Twenty years earlier, such demands would have brought the ire of the emperor and possibly the end of any reform. What had changed since then was the humiliating military defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895. The zhishi fenzi realized that the innovations made after the failure of the messianic movement of the Taiping Rebellion (1864) were insufficient. To show her willingness to modernize, China opened a few foreign language schools and translation bureaus, and in addition, a few modern factories had been established. However, they were too scarce to have impact on the rest of the country. The very existence of China was at stake.

The first wave of zhishi fenzi, intellectuals, wished to remain loyal to their culture, and began to search for equivalents in their own intellectual tradition. They claimed to have discovered segments of the Classics that had survived the great book burning in 221 BCE and contained commentaries from the Qin (221–206 BCE) and Han (206 BCE–220 CE) dynasties.

This new text of ancient studies gave scholars a new venue to interpret the Classics and justify modernization. It gave Kang Youwei (1858–1927), one of the earliest reformers, the ammunition to develop the theory of the "Great Community" (*Datong shu*). He borrowed this term from a chapter in the Liji (Book of Rites) called Liyun (On Propriety) that described the destiny of China in three stages. The first was the "golden age of antiquity," when the great Dao prevailed—an era of great peace (Taiping), unsullied by

the institutions of families or private property. The second stage was the "lesser tranquility," a devolution away from the golden age to a world marked by both military power and ritual morality. The third stage was the "age of disorder," which began in the times of Confucius, and a "coming age of rising peace," which would lead the world back toward great peace (Goldman 2002, 20).

On the pretext of limiting foreign influence on education, moderate reformers established a movement "to preserve the national essence" (*guocui*) that proved to be a vehicle for anti-foreign resistance. Although the national essence movement acknowledged the influence that the West had cast upon China in the past hundred years, members searched the ancient texts of the "one hundred schools of thought" (*juzi baijia*) to counteract Western influences. Led by secret societies and anti-Manchu loyalists, they inspired the conservatives to support any means to first overthrow the Manchu and then unite the people against the "enlightened," or pro-Western, factions.

The reformers pointed out that the relationship between the sage ruler and the people had led China to the creation of a unique Confucian social system that had been embodied in the early sage kings. Then the family system and its formal genealogical lines established China's racial unity, while language itself concentrated the essence of Chinese thought, and the legalists had shown the way to serve the needs of national wealth and power. They went on to define the Chinese people as a nation (*mincu*) based upon common ties of place, blood, custom, and culture (Goldman 2002, 45–47).

But the new wave of reformers was more radical than the previous one. They were not satisfied with cosmetic changes. They demanded an outright abolition of the old system and the establishment of a new system that would turn China into a strong nation. The more radical reformers started with the New Learning Movement (*xinxue*) in 1895, followed by the New Culture Movement (xin wenhua), and culminating with the May Fourth Movement in 1919. On May 4, 1919, students in Beijing staged an unprecedented mass demonstration against the unequal treaty that had been signed in Versailles in 1918. At the Paris Peace Conference, Chinese delegates signed away crucial rights in the Shandung peninsula and in the city of Qingdao to the Japanese in return for massive loans. The news shocked the Chinese public, and the zhishi fenzi used the mass media to disseminate the news to the public not in classical language but in daily spoken Chinese understood by the masses. They launched new magazines

(*New Tide [Xin Chao]* and *New Youth*) that criticized and ridiculed the old style. They attacked the unchallenged acceptance of the national heritage, called for a critical reappraisal of all the classics and ancient works, and advocated the creation of a new culture.

One of the leaders of this new culture was Hushi (1891–1962) a Western-educated intellectual who wrote in plain language, *baihua,* condemning the traditional emphasis on style over substance. He maintained that the classical style of writing was dead and that a dead language could not produce living literature. He proposed to write in a vernacular language and succeeded in creating a lucid, vivid style, which won immediate acceptance among liberals and forward-looking people.

Hushi advised students to shun classical allusions, time-worn literary phrases, and parallel sentences; to avoid imitating the ancients; and to write with meaning, substance, and genuine feelings (Hsu 1972, 589). Other intellectuals joined in his efforts and, starting in 1918, the *New Youth* was printed only in vernacular. Two years later, the Chinese government adopted the vernacular, and since then in China, the official language was the baihua, plain language.

Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), another Western-educated zhishi fenzi and, by some accounts, the father of the Chinese Revolution, organized a national revolution against the Qing (1644–1911) with the aid of secret societies. Influenced by Western political philosophy, he developed his Three Peoples' Principles (*sanmin zhuyi*) consisting of the People's Nationalism (*mincu*), the People's Rights, or democracy (*minquan*), and the People's Livelihood, or socialism (*minsheng*), reminiscent of President Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address, "of the people, by the people, and for the people."

Westerners hailed these principles as a cornerstone in Chinese democracy, but for China it was a continuation of the messianic vision of Hong Xiuquan (1814–1864), the leader of the Taiping Rebellion. In his youth, Sun Yat-sen idolized Hon Xiuquan and secretly aspired to be like him (Hsu 1972, 542). Sun received most of his early education in a missionary school in Hawaii (1879–1883); he was baptized in 1885 and in 1915, he married a Chinese Christian. Sun's early exposure to Christian education led him to aspire to be a populist leader fashionable in the West, yet his mystical belief that the leader personifies the nation and its aspirations had roots in biblical literature.

What did the Peoples' Three Principles mean to Sun? By his own

definition,

> People's Nationalism meant that all the people of the world are equal, and that no race may ever be suppressed and enslaved by another. People's Rights meant that all men are equal and together form a large family, and that a few may never suppress the many. All men have the same natural rights, *all men are brothers*.[73] People's Livelihood meant that the poor and the rich are of identical rank, and that the rich may not suppress or enslave the poor. (Bauer 1976, 345–346)

Westerners interpreted these principles as being derived directly from the need for a rapprochement with the West (Wright 1968, 454), but for Sun, this was a fulfillment of his childhood dream. He saw in them a continuation of the ideological principles expressed by Hong Xiuquan in his failed Heavenly Kingdom (1850–1864). China needed a new doctrine to transition into the modern age, but it also needed continuity. The transition was contained in the constitution like Three Principles, but they also contained an ingredient that stemmed from the constitution of the Jewish monarchy in biblical times: "Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and he wrote in a book and laid it before the Lord" (I Sam. 10:25).

Historically, the conditions in China in the early twentieth century emulated the rule of Jewish monarchy in biblical times (ca. tenth to sixth century BCE). The Jewish monarchy exhibited both moral progress and moral retrogression; it saw a transition from a tribal grouping into a united kingdom, and the Jewish king was accountable to the law of his judicial, moral, and religious conduct, just like any ordinary citizen. It was a constitutional monarchy based on the principles of equality, religious freedom, and national unity, formed by the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

After the death of King Solomon, domestic problems resulted in the division of the kingdom of Israel into two factions, the northern and the southern kingdoms, just like the conditions in China after the fall of the Qin Dynasty in 1911. Within a few short years of the end of Quin rule, China was divided between the nationalists and the Communists.

Sun's Three Principles constituted the basis of both nationalist and Communist China, and the situation in China differed from the Jewish monarchy in one respect: the latter consisted of the Twelve Tribes, while China consisted of a majority of Han Chinese. "We endeavored to awaken

the soul of the Chinese and to restore China to the Han Chinese," said Lu Haodong, a contemporary of Sun, in a verbal deposition in 1895 (Gentzler 1977, 129).

The similarities did not end there. Sun Yat-sen had also established a society that, like the Alliance Israelite Universelle, would advance the revolution in China. In China, it was called *Tongmenghui*, or Chinese Covenant Society, with a similar charter to the Jewish Alliance. It was organized in Tokyo in 1905 by Sun, as an antigovernment alliance that no longer needed to rely solely on overseas Chinese and secret societies. He called for Chinese intellectuals and activists in the Diaspora "to return to their respective provinces to advocate the revolutionary principles and to spread the idea of the republic of China" (Li 1967, 200–201). Many Chinese intellectuals who were studying abroad at the time were energized by this call; it made them feel wanted and needed again.

In the early twentieth century, the need of China and that of the Jews complemented each other in reverse. Both needed people with certain skills. China needed the zhishi fenzi, intellectuals, to establish an educational and leadership foundation, and the Jews needed farmers to establish an agricultural foundation in their new country. China had many farmers and laborers but few intellectuals, and the Jews had many intellectuals but few farmers in Israel. Palestine needed the Jews to return: "There can be no salvation for Israel if it does not found a government of its own in the Land of Israel …only then will the conduct of the state be in the hands of Children of Israel" (Ben-Sasson 1976, 894).

Here was the yin/yang in action. Chinese intellectuals returned to China to lead the country, and Jewish pioneers returned to Palestine to establish farming communities. The zhishi fenzi discarded the old system but were inexperienced in instituting a new governing system. China was thrown into turmoil and regained her direction in 1949. In contrast, Jewish settlers established new settlements called the *yishuv* and developed the economic foundation of the nation. But as far as governing was concerned, Israel was not able to solve its dilemma, for instance how to integrate biblical ethics in an independent Jewish nation? Without a government and land of their own, the future of the Jews had been uncertain, yet it was evident that the Jews could not establish a totalitarian government and rule over the minority in ways that other nations did.

The New Literary Movements

Jewish and Chinese nationalism depended on the literacy level of the people. Illiteracy was so widespread in China that it impeded national affairs. In rural areas, the literacy level was extremely low; in most cases, peasants could neither read nor write. In urban areas, some people had very limited access to basic education; others taught themselves to read a few commonly used characters, but the official language still eluded them.

The zhishi fenzi realized that there was a need to expand the education in their nation, and they called for abandoning the difficult written classical language and replaced it with the colloquial baihua (plain language). Classical Chinese was as rigid and ambiguous as biblical Hebrew, with an added layer of difficulty: it consisted of complex written characters that needed to be memorized and thus eluded the majority of the masses. Only the few who could set aside the time and could afford the financial burden became literate.

Illiteracy was not an issue for the Jews. They had command of several local languages and dialects, which was in addition to biblical Hebrew (the language of the Torah) and Yiddish, the daily conversational language within the communities. What they needed was an identifying language that would unite the Jews in the Diaspora with the national aspirations of Israel. Thus, the plain language in China and modern Hebrew in Israel became the vehicles of modern nationalism.

The zhishi fenzi demanded that the local spoken language be used in mass communication, and they wanted to bring the literature to the masses. They claimed that a simple change was not enough, and a new literature was needed, with new ideas in a simplified language. “The language used in the past two thousand years by literary people is dead; they all used an already dead language to create literature. But a dead language cannot create literature … If China wants a living literature, it must use a plain speech [*baihua*], must use a national language, must use vernacular,” wrote the Western-educated Hushi in “A Proposal to Revolutionize the Literature” published in the *New Youth* in 1916 (Wei 2002, 4). Chinese literature changed from the old-style writing into a vibrant vernacular style, calling for radical changes.

Was not this what the Jewish maskilim wanted too? The maskilim yearned to belong to a place that they could call home, where they could use their own language. But in contrast to China, they were dispersed, and in order to be accepted, they were forced to assimilate. Consequently, they not only wanted to integrate into the local society, they also wanted to integrate culturally. Assimilation into European society required that the Jews put aside Hebrew and Yiddish and use the local language for secular education and communication.

Jewish intellectuals solved this dilemma creatively. In the Jewish media, the maskilim used Hebrew, in daily life they used the local language, and in the Pale of Settlement they used Yiddish, a mixture of Hebrew, German, and local dialects. In the mid-nineteenth century, the maskilim translated romantic literature into Hebrew with an improved grammar and style. Poetry, drama, and historical novels became the main vehicles of expression, and literary translations of the secular word were published in Hebrew.

To their surprise, the Jewish readers found the new writings entertaining and liberating. The Hebrew language was transformed from the prophetic biblical language into secular and scientific writings to instruct readers in materialistic thought, social utilitarianism, and cultural Zionism.

The new literary movement widened the gap between the maskilim and traditionalists on several levels. In the mass media, the maskilim employed Hebrew as a means to manifest their separation from the tradition and to write about science, create realistic literature, and promote secular education. On a political level, the New Hebrew literature ridiculed the hypocritical *tzaddikim* (sages) who used the sacred literature to exploit the Jewish masses that could read the Torah but did not understand it.

The traditionalists objected to the use of Hebrew for scientific and literary purposes; they still considered it a sacred language, the language of the Torah, and thereby the language of Elohim. And they felt insulted by the attack on the tradition—using the Hebrew language. The traditionalist saw this attack as uprooting their authority, and they refused to use Hebrew for anything but biblical writings. Instead, they turned to Yiddish, the *lingua franca* of the Jewish communities at the time. Some Eastern European writers went further, claiming that Yiddish unified Judaism, and therefore they wrote exclusively in Yiddish.

But the maskilim objected to the widespread use of Yiddish on an

ideological level. They claimed that in these days, there was not a unified Judaism but only historical remnants, and the only common ground was a religious tie that was weakening and deteriorating. This argument was used to justify the idea that the Jews should identify with the local social structure and integrate—not only to acquire citizenship and equal rights, but to completely immerse themselves in the local political, social, and economic life.

The maskilim were greatly disappointed when they realized that the local authorities were not interested in emancipating the Jews; they only wanted to solve the so-called Jewish problem. In the wake of the Damascus blood libel incident in 1840, when a monk disappeared in Damascus and his fellow monks spread the rumor that Jews had murdered him as part of a religious ritual, the maskilim became more radical. Though the affair proved to be total fabrication, the maskilim concluded that the anti-Semitism was deeply rooted in the Western society.

Moses Hess (1812–1875, a German-born maskil who had renounced Judaism, only to reconvert later, compared the fate of China to that of the Jews. “Two ‘horrible examples of unfortunate people’ who had been punished for still identifying themselves with their dead institutions—the Chinese, ‘a body without a soul, and the Jews, a soul without a body,’ wandering like a ghost through the centuries” (Laqueur 1972, 48). Alluding to China was both allegorical and intuitive: allegorical because the Jews did not know much about China, and intuitive because the Jews felt a certain affinity with China—the anti-Chinese sentiments of the Western world were only equal to anti-Semitism in intensity.

Hess’s perception that China was a “body without a soul” was misguided, since China was spiritually equal to Judaism. This perception stemmed from China’s portrayal in the West, as an inferior and exotic race. China was aware of the long history of prejudice against the yellow race, but her weakness prevented her from protecting herself. Western colonial powers did not hesitate to use gunship diplomacy to force open the Chinese markets, and the Chinese were powerless against the anti-Chinese sentiments promulgated by Westerners with the same vengeance as anti-Semitism against the Jews. China was not equipped to deal with this relatively new problem, and when a series of anti-foreign measures failed, they changed tactics and tried to imitate the West, only to realize that their culture was not receptive to outside influences.

When a debate erupted in China over how best to confront the West, it exposed the wide divide between the traditionalists and the new intellectuals. The traditionalists wanted to introduce changes within the existing system, but the new intellectuals, the zhishi fenzi, went further and advocated far-reaching reforms that would do away with the old system. They claimed that national survival depended on their ability to respond to the challenges of the times, and they believed that a modern nation could be constructed by moral emotions (Goldman 2002, 6).

Nationalism became an ideological conviction sustained by emotions, and "national survival" replaced the intellectual project of enlightenment as the central task for intellectuals. Patriotic sentiments of national survival replaced the building blocks for constructing a modern nation that had been put in place with the Tongzhi Restoration. Nationalism to the zhishi fenzi was what Zionism was to the maskilim. The zhishi fenzi wanted to modernize China from top to bottom—and the Zionists wanted to modernize the Jewish culture from the bottom to top.

The maskilim and the zhishi fenzi exposed the weaknesses of their cultures vis-à-vis the realities of the times. Neither the Jews nor China were prepared to face the changes that Western science and technology brought about. The maskilim realized that the enlightened Western world used anti-Semitism to divert attention away from their own problems. The European powers had divided the world arbitrarily with a ruler, drawing lines on the map to designate boundaries, oblivious to the religious and national aspirations of the affected regions, but this approach swept anti-colonial sentiments under the rug. To divert attention from the real problems and the deficiencies of the colonial system, the Jewish problem was raised to the forefront, and anti-Semitism was channeled to divert the attention of the people.

In light of the failure of the haskala movement, the Jews asked, why should the Jews be regarded different and inferior to other nationalities? The principle of being "a man in the outside world and a Jew at home" only alienated the youth educated in a secular environment and assimilated at a rapid pace. They forgot that they were Jews. The maskilim concluded that the hatred of the Jews would not go away; it was here to stay for times to come.

Emancipation, the maskilim realized, had been a gift bestowed by those people among whom Jews had lived, while national consolidation and political concentration would be acts of self-liberation of "auto-

emancipation"—a return of the Jews to a political condition in their own country that would eradicate the hatred. The Jews "need a homeland of our own" (Ben-Sasson 1976, 895).

The zhishi fenzi pointed out that China needed to abandon the age-old cultural ailment of avoiding responsibility. Since ancient times, China had hidden behind a veil of bureaucratic jargon, memorials to the throne, and senseless large-scale plans. The problem with this mode of governing was that it lacked clarity, lucidity, and details. Plans were put into motion, only to be recognized too late as being unworkable or requiring more resources than was originally thought.

When juxtaposed with Western technology, the gap between the officials and the zhishi fenzi widened exponentially (Lo 1976). While the zhishi fenzi concentrated only on the marvels of Western technology and innovations, the officials tried to deal with the West's actions that made China vulnerable to outright colonial occupation. Only after the zhishi fenzi exposed the ills of the colonial rule and demonstrated that it was more show than spirit did the revolutionary fervor gain momentum.

"The West emphasizes war, struggle, the individual, utility, and rule by law, while the East is devoted to peace, repose, the family, and the emotions. … The West was a culture of positive action, while in Eastern culture, passivity prevailed" (Allito 1979, 76). Many zhishi fenzi were convinced that passivity was the source of China's weakness and difficulties. Once the foreign powers were gone, they envisioned a future world culture based upon a synthesis of East and West. The active, progressive worldview of the West would replace the somnambulant Eastern attitude, and the 'oriental spiritual life' would keep Western materialism under control" (Allito 1979, 76). But, as with the Jewish nationalists, once the wheels of nationalism were set in motion, revolutionary changes became unavoidable.

The Utopian Reformers: Herzl and Kang Youwei

Two of the early reformers who awakened the nationalistic sentiments of the

their people had never met, never heard of nor had contact with each other, yet their ideas stemmed from the same desire to avert the disintegration of their cultures. Late in the nineteenth century, China and the Jews were on the verge of annihilation. The Jews faced a lethal enemy called anti-Semitism, while China faced the possibility of losing sovereignty to colonialism.

Under these seemingly hopeless circumstances, a Jewish and a Chinese idealist each rose with one determination to save their cultures. Theodor Herzl, a completely assimilated Jewish maskil who, in some circles, is called the father of Zionism, and his counterpart in China, Kang Youwei, who was raised in the classical Chinese tradition, instigated similar movements that impacted their nations beyond their expectations. Herzl was the salon Jew; Kang Youwei was the velvet revolutionary.

Kang Youwei (1858–1927) was born in Nankai, southern China, and was educated in the traditional classical style. In his youth, he witnessed the efficiency of the British colonial administration and wondered why China couldn't be as efficient. China's obsession with the past hindered progress, and her backwardness exposed the dangers of the colonial powers. He immersed himself in the studies of faith in the Liji, an aspect of Confucianism that previous scholars had neglected. He believed that buried inside the original pre-book-burning texts of the Liji (221 BCE) was a faith in need of change. The question that he tried to answer was, Could it be that hidden in the Classics were future prophecies?

Kang claimed that the ideas for reform were clearly stated in the Spring and Autumn Annals, but they had historically been overlooked. According to Kang, the annals mentioned a three-stage political evolution, from the existing stage of disorder through a local peaceful stage to the stage of world peace. Kang used this evolutionary process to justify reform within the existing system. Such interpretations meant that the new institutional and scientific elements being introduced by the West could be seen as having antecedents in the Chinese tradition, and thus need not be simply rejected out of hand in an attempt to preserve some original Chinese "purity" (Spence 1981, 4).

In his commentary *The Great Equality* (*Li Yunzhu*), Kang blended the New Text Confucianism with Western-inspired modernization and found justification in the Confucian classics for fundamental reform in the direction of constitutional monarchy and state-supported modernization. In a memorial to Emperor Guangxu, Kang wrote,

> Our present trouble lies in our clinging to old institutions without knowing how to change … Institutions are for the purpose of preserving one's territories, and if the ancestral territory cannot be preserved, what good is it to maintain the ancestral institutions? … After studying ancient and modern institutions, Chinese and foreign, I have found that the institutions of the sage-kings and Three Dynasties [2200–476 BCE] were excellent, but ancient times were different from today … and that the age of universal unification is different from that of sovereign nations. (Gentzler 1977, 87)

In a follow-up audience with the emperor in 1898, Kang reinforced his view that

> the four barbarians are all invading us, and their attempted partition is gradually being carried out: China will soon perish. … Today, most of the high ministers are very old and conservative, and they do not understand matters concerning foreign countries. If Your Majesty wishes to rely on them for reform, it will be like "climbing a tree to seek fish." (Hsu 1972, 443)

These were brave words at a time when China was gradually being forced to make territorial concessions. But Kang's words also turned out to be as prophetic as those of the Theodor Herzl, a Jewish visionary, who in 1897, had foreseen the establishment of a Jewish state. Herzl was not as forthright as Kang, to utter such words publicly, though in his diary he wrote, "In Bazel, [74] I created the Jewish state … if I had said this in public, people would have laughed at me. But in five years or perhaps in fifty years, everybody will see it" (Sachar 1958, 272).

Herzl (1860–1904) was born in Budapest in 1860; he was a fully assimilated maskil with limited Jewish religious education and little interest in Judaism. His training in law landed him a job as a correspondent for the *Neue Freie Presse* in 1891. But the Dreyfus trial (1897) was a wake-up call, after which Herzl became convinced that Judaism had no future in the enlightened Western societies, and unless the Jews acquired a state of their own, they might not survive.

Herzl first suggested the idea of a Jewish homeland to the financier

Baron Hirsh, who thought that the young man was insane. Had Herzl known Kang Youwei, he would have agreed that convincing the Jewish community to adopt radical changes was like "climbing a tree to seek fish." The idea of establishing a Jewish state was too idealistic for the times; the Jews were still too engaged in self-reflection to pay attention to the larger picture.

Herzl publicly proposed his idea of a Jewish state in a pamphlet published in 1896 called *Der Judenstaat*—The Jewish State. Akin to Kang Youwei, Herzl derived his idea from antiquity:

> The idea, which I have developed in this pamphlet, is an ancient one. It is the restoration of the Jewish State. The world resounds with outcries against the Jews, and these outcries have awakened the slumbering idea … I have discovered neither the Jewish situation as it has crystallized in history, nor the means to remedy it. … The Jewish question persists [anti-Semitism] wherever Jews live in appreciable numbers … I consider the Jewish question neither a social nor religious one, even though it sometimes takes these and other forms. It is a national question … In our native lands where we have lived for centuries we are still decried as aliens, often by men whose ancestors had not come at a time when Jewish sighs had long been heard in the country. The majority decides who "alien" is … If we were left in peace …. But I think we shall not be left in peace. (Laqueur 1972, 84, 86).

Herzl sensed the anomaly of Jewish life in Europe and the dangers that would face the Jews during the years to come, and he was looking desperately for a solution before it was too late. He felt that the Jews could not wait.

The Jewish state was to be created as an answer to anti-Semitism. "The nation is a historical assembly of people that excel in the cooperation of the known and united by a common hater. The hater makes us a nation" (Dubnov 1956, 799). Herzl preferred a democratic monarchy or an aristocratic republic. Nations were not yet fit for unlimited democracy, he believed, and in their respect, Jews were no better that the rest of humankind. He was opposed to any form of theocracy, believing that priests should not be allowed to interfere in the administration of the state.

Every man and woman in the Jewish state would be free and undisturbed in his faith (or disbelief) and his nationality. Everyone,

regardless of creed or nationality, would have equality before the law (Laqueur 1972, 93). Herzl wanted to hoist the Jewish flag in a Jewish homeland. “With a flag people are lead—perhaps even to the Promised Land. For a flag men live and die” (Laqueur 1972, 89).

At this junction, the two visions were congruent in reverse. Kang Youwei thought that by turning Confucianism into a state religion, China would regain respect in the world. Conversely, Herzl thought that by establishing a Jewish homeland, the Jews would be free to practice their way of life. What each advocated was to try what the other had already experienced. Judaism had already learned the dark sides of religious and racial persecutions, and China had experienced the feeling of being hostage in their own land. But neither had experienced what the other had learned. Had they been able to look into the other’s condition, they would have realized that the destiny of their people ran inversely to each other.

Fifty years later, both prophecies materialized; a Jewish state was established, and China regained her autonomy. But the Jewish and Chinese problem did not disappear. The Jewish state became the source of conflict for the unforeseeable future, while China isolated herself from the rest of the world. The Jews experienced the feeling of being prisoners in their own land, while China learned that religion did not lead to more respect in the West. What Herzl and Kang had started would evolve into changes that revolutionized both cultures without changing their identities.

The Practical Reformers: Liang Qichao and Ahad Ha’am

Parallel with the utopian reformers rose two literary figures, one Jewish and one Chinese, who awakened the spirit of nationalism in the individual. Ahad Ha’am, an Eastern European maskil, and Liang Qichao, a Chinese zhishi fenzi, were two ultra-nationalists who went beyond the utopian dreams of Kang and Herzl and determined that it was the duty of each individual to solve the national problems. Their writings appealed to the masses; their logic wrapped the cultural problems in a traditional cloak and encouraged the individual to sacrifice the self for the benefit of all. Liang was a discipline of Kang Youwei who departed from his mentor, and Ahad Ha’am was the

antithesis of Herzl.

Liang (1873–1929) was educated in Japan, where he studied Western philosophical works. His writing reflected a mixture of Western and Eastern thinking; his style departed from the standard Chinese "eight-legged essay,"[75] and he injected emotional and persuasive discourses. His style was refreshing; it suited the young intellectuals and had considerable influence on the course of Chinese history.

In spite of his bitter condemnation of contemporary political and social life, Liang was profoundly attached to the Chinese culture from which he had sprung:

> I love my fatherland, I love my fellow countrymen … Born in this country and of this people, enjoying the blessing of this learning, it is then our duty to sing its praises, to enhance it, to make it more illustrious to extend, and elevate it. (Grieder 1970, 29)

He recognized early the need for an awakened citizenry as the foundation on which to build a strong nation, and he perceived the role that the individual would have to assume in the new order:

> A nation's citizenry is made up of individuals, and a nation's sovereignty consists in the gathering together of individual rights. Therefore, if we seek [to awaken] the thought, the consciousness, the activity of our people [as a whole], these aims cannot be achieved without [first awakening] the thought, the consciousness, the activity of each individual. … Those best able to benefit themselves must first benefit the group, and from this will follow benefit to themselves. (Grieder 1970, 91–92)

Liang stated that nations, akin to humans, have a nature (*xing*), and their fate depended upon an intangible quality, visible in religion, customs, and language. Nature can change but cannot be eradicated. Only when a nation's nature is devoid of all its sacred tradition is it considered eradicated. Liang supported a living "national character" (*guoxing*) that was attainable through moral propriety of the masses not yet spoiled by Western influences:

> The people of a country capable of standing in the world must have

> their own particular characteristics. From moral principles and laws, down to customs habits, literature, and the arts, all possess an independent spirit, which is passed on by grandfathers and fathers and continued by sons and grandsons; and thus the group has cohesion, and the nation is formed. This is actually the fundamental source of nationalism. (Gentzler 1977, 139)

China's sages had engaged in a common search for consistency in ideal and practical application. *Ideal* meant a system of values founded on the human rights of Chinese philosophy, opposed to the materialism of the West:

> The greatest goal in life is to make a contribution to the whole of humanity. Why? Because the fullest measures of "myself" are found only in the whole of humanity … Our people constitute one-fourth of the world's population: we should assume one-fourth of the responsibility for the happiness of mankind as a whole. If we do not meet this responsibility, then we will not be able to face our ancestors, nor our contemporaries, nor, in fact, ourselves. (Grieder 1970, 135)

Similar ideas resonated in the writings of Ahad Ha'am (1856–1927). Ahad Ha'am (One of the People) was the pen name for Asher Ginsburg, a Ukrainian Jew who attended several Western European universities. He regarded Herzl's vision as utopian Zionism, and Ahad Ha'am, akin to Liang Qichao in China, demanded that the individual Jew make sacrifices for the welfare of the entire community:

> Why are we different from other nations and languages? Of all the *mitzvoth*, laws, blessings and curses that the Torah put in front of us, only one purpose was relevant: The triumph of the entire nation in its country of origin at the expense of the happiness of the individual. Every Jew is just a body part in the eyes of the Almighty, and the good that will accumulate to the community will be the payback for individual deeds. (Ahad Ha'am 1948, 41).

> In the West, it is the problem of the Jews; in the East, the problem of Judaism:

> One weighs on the individual, the other on the nation. The one is felt by the Jews who have had a European education, the other by Jews whose education has been Jewish. The one is a product of anti-Semitism, and is dependent on anti-Semitism for its existence; the other is a natural product of a real link with a culture of thousands of years. (Schwarz 1956, 435)

Ahad Ha'am exposed the innermost religious and cultural customs of the Pale of Settlement. "Our purpose is to know ourselves, is to understand our life, and prepare for the future with understanding" (Urinovsky 1962, 2:149–150). When he talked about Judaism, he meant everything that the Jews had learned to know about their characteristics, and national spirit … to give the people and inner idealism and nationalism that would answer all the spiritual questions. When he talked about life, he meant the good and bad as they were reflected in the living environment and their consequences. When he talked about preparing for the future, he alleged that Zionism was too much concerned with the physical safety of the individual Jew. Instead, Jewish nationalism ought properly to be concerned with reviving the cultural loyalties and spiritual productivity of the Jewish people

Ahad Ha'am rejected notions like national sentiment and national heritage but favored the establishment of a national spiritual center that would radiate beneficial spiritual influence to the Diaspora and strengthen Jewish nationalism (Ahad Ha'am 1948, 56). The material settlement in Palestine could be the foundation of that national spiritual center, which was destined to be created in the Jewish ancestral country in response to a real and insistent national demand.

Political Zionism was looking for a haven for individual Jews, one that would "provide a remedy, complete tranquility, and a national glory for them" (Ben-Sasson 1976, 899). The first settlers of the Lovers of Zion[76] sought to provide only a "secure refuge" (Ben-Sasson 1976, 894) for Judaism and a cultural bond of unity for the nation as such. But the mission of Zionism was to solve the problem not merely of the individual Jew but of Judaism as a whole, as well. Convinced that Palestine offered little solution to the Jewish political disabilities, that most Jews would live in the Diaspora for many generations to come, Ahad Ha'am urged the Zionists to concentrate their energies on evolving Israel's historic land and community, which would

be a “true miniature of the Jewish People” (Sachar 1958, 276).

Both Liang Qichao and Ahad Ha’am planted the seeds of nationalism in the minds of individuals: each and every Jew or Chinese was responsible for the welfare of their nation. Liang departed from the collective thinking of traditional China and asked each individual to concentrate his efforts for the sake of entire nation. Ahad Ha’am departed from the individual thinking of traditional Judaism and asked them to work together for the sake of Judaism. He did not envision a Jewish homeland; he was convinced that the Jews were too scattered in the Diaspora to return to their homeland.

Though neither Liang nor Ahad Ha’am advocated revolutionary changes, they focused on the need to strengthen the spiritual connection between individuals and their culture. Ahad Ha’am pointed out that it was possible for the Jews to preserve their identity within the secular world, without a country of their own, if they maintained a spiritual center in their biblical homeland. They could not abandon their tradition and expect to survive in a hostile world. Liang’s call awakened the Chinese revolutionaries to bypass the stages that the French Revolution (1789) had gone through, and create conditions that would achieve their own kind of society through sheer application of human energy and willpower.

Chinese revolutionaries were very ambitious and impatient. Once China decided to catch up to the great powers, it leapfrogged over the evolutionary stages that other countries experienced and, instead, immersed itself in revolution and reform at an astonishing pace. Opium was eradicated almost overnight—within ten years, 80 percent of the land once used for opium poppies was converted to food crops—and the country underwent changes that had no parallel in history. People conducted their affairs as if they had many years of experience instead of only a few days. Money poured in for reform and revolutionary groups. It was not uncommon for a member of an organization, whose salary was twenty-five yuan per month, to live on one-quarter of his income and contribute the other three-quarters to the cause.

Westerners in the far corners of the world could hardly believe it, but Chinese houseboys were sending most of their salaries to patriotic organizations. One observer noted, “A nation in which a spirit of ruthless self-sacrifice is still so common may bring forth things that will astonish the world” (Wright 1968, 61).

The Media

The world was astonished at the pace of changes in Judaism and China. In the second half of the nineteenth century, transformation was measured in months and weeks, not in centuries, as had been the case since antiquity. Despite this rapid pace, Judaism and China maintained their identity; they were still the same as in antiquity but with a new façade. This was in contrast to other civilizations, which vanished during transition. How did the Jews and China accomplish this? The simple answer is mass media.

The media was one of the few economic venues open to the Jews, and it was unregulated. By the mid-nineteenth century, Jews in Germany occupied prominent positions, and quite a few papers were under Jewish ownership. The Jewish media called upon the Jews to address issues that were close to them, to fight against discrimination and anti-Jewish laws, to close ranks and unite behind the Jewish problems. It solidified the Jews and addressed the entire Diaspora rather than individual communities.

In the West, the Jewish media was secular, and Hebrew was used only to address Jewish issues. But due to the constant anti-Jewish proclamations, the media became sarcastic about life and turned to literature to express feelings and describe misery. Intellectual literature was replaced with Jewish national issues, demanding equality and the end of the discriminatory Jewish laws.

In the East, however, the situation was more relaxed, the educational level of the Jews was confined to scriptural studies, and integration and assimilation were not on the agenda. Eastern European writers often wrote in Yiddish, which made the publications more available to the Jews at large. They wrote about daily life, romantic and sentimental topics that touched the lives of the people, while love and hardships emancipated the Jews from the burden of being Jewish. The combination of the secular Hebrew media in the West and the sentimental writings in Yiddish in the East exposed the dire conditions of the Jews to all. The call for a homeland was not far on the horizon.

If the media was the catalyst for Jewish unity, it was the bedrock of the Chinese revolution. The question many Chinese asked was: What is wrong with China, and what can be done to save her? This was not a

rhetorical question hidden within the halls of official policy makers; it was exposed to all to see, and it was published in the mass media in plain language.

Western-minded intellectuals, the zhishi fenzi, turned to the media to spread their message. They called for a critical re-evaluation of China's cultural heritage in light of modern standards, a willingness to part with those elements that made China weak, and a determination to accept Western science, democracy, and culture as the foundation of a new order. At the same time, they launched a campaign to introduce a new literature based on vernacular language instead of classical.

This intellectual outburst dealt a shattering blow to Confucianism—including traditional ethics, customs, human relations, and social conventions—and ushered in a new, iconoclastic attitude towards China's past (Hsu 1972, 581). Some Chinese historians believe that these changes were only comparable to the "One Hundred Schools of Thought" movement during the Eastern Zhou Dynasty of 722–221 BCE (Wei 2000, 23).

The Chinese intellectual outburst was equal in depth, scope, and impact to the haskala and Zionist movements. Both movements grew from external forces that applied equally to the Jews and to China. The Jews were humiliated at every turn, denied civil rights, denied equal treatment, and often used as scapegoats. China suffered a series of humiliating defeats that began in the mid-nineteenth century and culminated in the unacceptable Twenty-One Demands[77], under the terms of which, for all practical purposes, China was to become a colony of Japan.

Nothing mobilized Chinese opinion more than the humiliation suffered under the Treaty of Versailles in 1918. The people felt that the warlords sold out the interest of the China. It inflamed the intellectuals who used the media to arouse the Chinese people against foreign aggression and imperialism. Intellectuals who at the time were studying abroad—the majority in Japan—returned home, took control of the media, established newspapers, and conveyed their firm objection to the partitioning of China. To spread their message throughout the country, they abandoned the old-style classical form, which had been solely the domain of the literati, and wrote in plain language that appealed to the masses. Within a matter of a few years, they had established over four hundred papers written in plain language (Wei 2000, 5).

The media played a liberating role in both Judaism and China; it

questioned the value of tradition and advocated far-reaching changes. Though the Jewish media was controlled by traditionalists in the East and enlightened maskilim in the West, they both challenged the heavy burden imposed by the Torah. It was time to adjust the rules to adapt to the modern lifestyle. The maskilim advocated complete assimilation; the traditionalist advocated gradual changes, and both called for an emancipated Jew who could function in any environment and yet maintain his identity.

In China, the traditionalists controlled the media, and they sought a way to regain China's independence. They promulgated a system conforming to modern times but with distinctive Chinese characteristics. To this end, the papers published short stories in plain language, dealing with the affections and daily lives of ordinary people. Surprisingly, these stories quickly captured the hearts and minds of the masses; they exposed the deep soul of the Chinese people, who had been shunned by official publications.

Though the new writers were trying to keep up with the reforms, they found themselves in a transitional period that turned stories of hardship, life, and love into political messages. They called for an emancipated China; life was a collection of sentimental issues, of love and being loved, issues that freed the individual from the heavy burden of traditional customs. It removed all the artificial and hypocritical restraint imposed by the Confucian society (Goldman 2002, 168).

The media exposed the humane side of both cultures, showing that they had deep souls and differed only in outward appearances. Jews of different background were like one another and Chinese from different regions were like one another. It paved the way for the people to connect with each other. The media unified the Jews in the Diaspora against racial injustice, and they increasingly voiced their opinion in favor of a Jewish homeland. In China, the media dismantled the walls of orthodoxy and sent the nation into a search for modernization.

Chapter 8: Modern Times

The Zionists and the Chinese Revolutionaries

Centuries of studying the scriptures and the Classics had failed to prepare the Jews and the Chinese to face the rapidly changing world, yet, it had taught them to be quick learners and to adapt to circumstances. In addition, the study of the ancient texts had instilled in them a unique sense of purpose and discipline. For instance, they removed the media from the exclusive domain of intellectuals and utilized it as a vehicle to disseminate ideas quickly and effectively.

In the Jewish world, the impact of the media was almost instantaneous. In China, the media supported a resolution to establish a new society with Chinese characteristics. As more people became partially literate, the media used the *dazibao*—"big character poster," large sheets of paper with slogans or messages, especially written by students, pasted on walls, trees, any conspicuous place available—to convey messages to the masses.

Both the Jews and the Chinese reacted to change in their unique ways. First, they consulted the ancient canons to see if current conditions had precedents, and then the Jewish and Chinese reformers implemented the changes that their circumstances necessitated. For example, the display of unity and solidarity of the May Fourth Movement in 1919 was unprecedented in China. Indeed, even the rural population found grounds to support the urban student movement.

Equally unprecedented was the Balfour Declaration issued on November 2, 1917, which constituted the legal framework for a Jewish homeland. Jews in the Diaspora interpreted the Balfour Declaration as a prophecy come true, and they united under its banner to support the creation of the state of Israel. Not since the Jewish monarchy in biblical times had the Jews been so united in support of their homeland. These events became symbols that defined Chinese and Jewish nationalism.

The revolutionaries quickly disseminated nationalistic aspirations. Both the Zionists and the Chinese revolutionaries used the new means of

communication to save their cultures from extinction, and I think it is safe to say that this was the first time in their history that a national movement was led by revolutionaries who turned their backs on tradition to save tradition.

While the May Fourth Movement and the Balfour Declaration constituted the foundation of modern China and Israel, they were as much complementary as they were contradictory of each other. China was a nation that had never overthrown a ruler without having in place another ruler with a claim to the Mandate of Heaven. The Jews had not had a country since biblical times. Despite this contradiction, both faced the same dilemma: what is the proper way to govern—constitutional monarchy, democracy, dictatorship, or something else? Neither the Liji nor the Torah had prepared their people for this eventuality, and the revolutionaries faced the task of testing the boundaries set in antiquity.

The Chinese revolutionaries had bypassed the evolutionary stages of the French, American, and Russian Revolutions to make China strong and rapidly on par with the Western powers. The French Revolution had created a new slogan, “Liberty, equality, and fraternity”; the American Revolution had discarded British tradition by adopting a written constitution; and the Russian Revolution had disbanded the imperial rule and replaced it with the “power to the people,” a.k.a. socialism. The Chinese revolutionaries studied these examples and took a different road—a unique road. They began the revolution in the rural areas and then gradually spread it to the cities, the reverse of all precedents.

The revolutionaries understood the mentality of the rural areas and knew that China’s inferiority derived from her poor image in the eyes of the West. Westerners had very little understanding of China. They could only observe and comment on their impression of Chinese life; they only saw the poor coolies, a sea of yellow faces trying to make a living. They did not see the spirit and determination behind those faces. They did not feel the overwhelming concern and anxiety lest the Chinese should suffer the catastrophe of *wang guo* that is, losing their state and becoming “slaves without a country.”

For the Chinese, this possibility was very real. Importing ideas and adopting scientific and technological advances carried social and political risks. On the one hand, they could bring modernization to China and fundamentally alter the Chinese social structure. On the other hand, the dream of a new China with Chinese characteristics would be forsaken. Here

the government and the intellectuals diverged from the revolutionaries. The government and the literati tried to strike a balance between modernization and tradition and shore up support from the urban population. The revolutionaries understood the deep resentment that the countryside had harbored for centuries toward the oppressive imperial system, and they turned to the rural population for support. Had the revolutionaries not mobilized the peasants against the old system and foreign intervention, China would have become a Western colony.

The Jewish revolutionaries, the Zionists, were in a more precarious situation. They had only a signed letter of intent that stated that the British government "views with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object" (Ben-Sasson 1976, 991). They had no land from which to operate, they were scattered in the Diaspora, and they operated outside of the law. The Jewish revolutionaries were outlaws in Palestine; in comparison to China, they were on par with the secret societies.

Though the Balfour Declaration supported, in theory, a homeland for the Jews, the reality was that the British military government adopted a strict interpretation of the mandate and refused to allow Jewish immigration to Palestine. The Jews wanted to establish their presence in Palestine as a prelude to statehood, but the British were in the way, severely limiting immigration.

Out of these contradictions emerged the new China and Israel. China adopted a new system with Chinese characteristics, and the Jews carved out a small country for the Jewish state. Democracy was in the air in China, but only on paper. Everybody was talking about democracy, and the Three Principles of Sun Yat-sen constituted the basis of a new society, but implementing such far-reaching ideas required radical means. Never before in history had the Chinese masses been asked to chart the course of their own destiny. Democracy, individual liberty, equality of the sexes, and freedom were new concepts that they found confusing.

The Chinese had to ask themselves, what was the meaning of freedom? If being free meant that everybody did what they wanted, the answer was simple: they wanted a decent livelihood and to get rid of corrupt officials. If freedom meant law and order, that brought back memories of the unification of China in antiquity under the ruthless rule of Emperor Huang of the Qin Dynasty, who in 221 BCE united China at a great loss of life. His

actions left a permanent scar etched in the Chinese mind, and China had ever since rejected the strict legalist approach to governing. The new China was not ready to revive it.

Confucianism remained the only viable ideology that the new China could embrace. In the past, political change had been accompanied by self-destructive civil war, and the current situation was no different. The country was divided among warlords who fought against each other and often against the interests of the nation. Out of this chaos, the Communists emerged; they would use the disparity between the urban and rural populations to their advantage.

Democracy in Judaism was rooted in the scriptures that can be dated to the rule of the elders during the period of the judges and the monarchy in biblical times. The covenant deemed each individual Jew to be equal before the law, a legacy that had been handed down to modern times. Since this principle had been applied to modern Israel, where each party had the right of representation, the conditions created a state of affairs that became difficult to govern. At the time of the founding of the state of Israel in 1948, the population was less than one million people represented by over twenty parties, from the ultra-orthodox religious parties to the secular Zionists. Only the military remained apolitical, but with time, retired high-ranking military officers joined partisan politics and created a situation where compromise became even more daunting.

Out of this contradiction, emerged a democracy that needed to find what the Chinese called the Doctrine of the Mean[78]: “Let the states of equilibrium and harmony exist in perfection, and a happy order will prevail throughout heaven and earth, and all things will be nourished and flourish” (Legge 1975, 385). In addition, the Jewish voice from the Diaspora could not be ignored; they became a force to be reckoned with in governing Israel. Israel was a showcase of government in contradictions.

But, as history had shown, contradiction was the lubricant of social and political changes. In antiquity it was the yin/yang, and in modern times “there is nothing that does not contain contradictions; without contradiction nothing would exist” (Mao 1971, 69, 92). Revolutions arise from controversy, and a time comes when talk is not enough; ideas must be acted upon. Both the New China and the state of Israel were the result of contradictions—with one difference: China’s contradictions were internal, and those of Israel were both internal and external.

Internally, the Chinese Communists embraced the countryside. Farmers were the backbone of the Chinese society, and yet they had been neglected by all previous political movements. Mao Zedong (1893–1976) understood the peasant mentality and knew that China's strength lay in the countryside and not urban areas. The peasants were squeezed from all sides—heavy taxes, corrupt officials, and unscrupulous landlords. Mao went from village to village, offering the peasants the chance to restore their pride and take destiny into their own hands. He raised some questions that the peasants were afraid to ask:

> What is the reason for this? Why do we all suffer? Was it the "eight ideographs" [*ba gua*][79] that determined our fate, or was it the land system and the rents that we pay? Why shouldn't we now take on the landlords and right the wrongs of the past? (Hinton 1966, 132–133)

Parallel to this were the Zionists, who understood the mentality of the Jews in the Diaspora. They embraced the Jewish youth, who were disillusioned with promises of emancipation, and offered them a way to restore their pride in the future Jewish homeland. Though Palestine was under British occupation, and Britain actively tried to prevent Jewish immigration, the Zionists resorted to any means to bring Jews home.

Put in a different perspective, we have a situation where the internal pressure in China acted like the yin against the external pressure of yang in Palestine. In China, the peasants wanted to usurp authority but lacked the self-confidence necessary to confront the urban areas, and in contrast, the Jews in the Diaspora were self-confident but lacked the means to usurp the British mandate. The stakes were high; China was afraid of losing their country, and the Jews were afraid that they would not be permitted to establish their country. What would it take to awaken the Jews and China?

Almost simultaneously, the Zionists and the Chinese Communists reached similar resolutions. The Zionists stopped talking about a homeland; they were determined to establish it. They saw that modern anti-Semitism denied the Jews equal rights just because they were Jews and therefore racially inferior. Hatred of Jews arose from the incompatibility of the specifically Jewish culture, organized on religious and national lines, with the systems of the prevailing governments (Singer 2003, 155).

A Jewish state with Jewish government would rectify the situation. But the Zionists also knew that the Jews were too weak to confront the problems independently, so they proposed to tackle the problem as a unified community.

The Communists in China ceased to talk about foreign intervention; they were determined first to "sweep clean the entire room and only then invite guests" (Wei 2001, 559). First, China needed to discard the old imperial system and then unite the country against foreign aggression. Once the nation was united, Western military superiority was anything but immaterial. The Communists realized that the tactics used by colonial powers in Palestine, the Middle East, and India would not work in China.

In the Middle East, the British tried to prevent Jewish immigration while in India British rule was welcomed by the regional governments, who were interested in trade. Indian imperial authority had been broken since 1740, and the provinces exercised unprecedented autonomy. But the situation is China was different. China was not interested in interaction with the West, and maritime trade had been forced upon her. In a letter to King George III of England, the Chinese Emperor Qianlong (1736–1795) clearly stated that the empire "possesses all things in prolific abundance and desires nothing" (Panikkar 1969, 93–94).

Yet the forces that brought changes to traditional Judaism and orthodox China were rooted in their heritages. The tenets of the Torah were fused into Jewish nationalism, while the tenets of Liji, Confucianism, were fused into Chinese ultra-nationalism (under the guise of communism).

Political Zionists saw the Jews in the Diaspora as condemned to national death through assimilation. Spiritual Zionists hoped that the minority who chose to settle in Palestine would eventually build a pure national spiritual center that would attract Jews from all over. These two facets of Jewish nationalism supported the "negation of the Diaspora," which meant that they agreed that Judaism could not develop any further in the Diaspora as a nation, and they established a spiritual center of Judaism in Palestine. The disenchanted Jews turned Zionist, departed from the letter of the Talmud, and returned to the spirit of biblical prophecy. Whereas in antiquity, Elohim had led them to the land of Canaan, this time the nonbeliever—the *apikorism*—agnostic Zionists, returned the believers to the Promised Land.

The question for China was whether the traditional way of virtue was compatible with Western materialism. There were those who argued that

since antiquity, the form of government had changed, but the principles of government had remained the same, and therefore they could be harmonized. But other, more influential people like Liang Qichao, who visited the West at the end of the World War I (1918), suggested blending Chinese tradition with Western technology, and at the same time, infusing Chinese values into Western science. Such a combination would benefit the world. It would create a "spiritual culture" (*jingshen wenming*) that would accept some Western scientific advances interwoven with Chinese culture (Wei 2000, 21–23).

Mao Zedong rejected this argument and implemented a policy rooted in the Liji, with his own twist. In a style that had been prevalent in antiquity, most notably in the style of the speeches in the Book of History (*Shujing*), Mao appealed directly to the people living in the countryside. His speeches aroused the masses and instilled in them a certain pride that no other intellectual did.

In contrast to other intellectuals, Mao had never worried about his Chinese identity. He had faith in China and Chinese culture, and he never wavered from this belief. He used the Classics to rebut the traditionalists and elevate the laborers to new social heights:

> When a [Confucian] disciple asked him how to plough fields, he replied, "I do not know; I am not as good as the farmers." And about how to plant vegetables, he also replied, "I do not know; I am not as good as the vegetable gardeners. (Mao 1971, "Talks at the Yenan Forum")

How did the Jews and the Chinese attain these changes in less than one generation? It is called revolution. If we define revolution as a means to change the interpersonal relationship between individuals and society, then Zionism was a revolution that aimed at establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine based on the principles of democracy rooted in the Torah. This definition would also fit the Chinese revolution; they eradicated the old imperial system and substituted it with socialism turned into communism. Admittedly, communism was a Western concept that had originated with the *Communist Manifesto* of Karl Marx (1818–1883), a Jewish intellectual, who envisioned a state where "everybody worked according to his abilities."

Despite public acceptance of the *Manifesto* as the source of the

Chinese revolution, Mao fused it with the traditional concept of utopia, the Confucian *datong*, which was more palatable to the people.

> The *tianxia* was vast, the organization of the society complicated, and the knowledge of the people limited … The first requirement for this was to have some great basic principles. At present, the reformers were beginning with details, such as assemblies, constitutions, presidents, cabinets, military affairs, industry, education, and so on. While these should not be ignored, the crux of the issue was to unite—as opposed to the traditional division—the hearts of the "little people" [*xiao ren*] with that of the "superior men" [*junzi*] based on thought and morals. Though the latter have a higher level of knowledge and virtue, they only exist on the basis of political institutions and economic activities mainly established by ordinary people, the mass that constitute the source of the "superior man." Thus, the superior man must educate and transform the masses in order to attain the "great community" [*datong*]. The first action should be in understanding the common people … Men should all have a morality of mutual aid and work voluntarily … In the field of thought and philosophy "we have moved forward to pragmatism," liberated the individual from the shackles of the old society and strengthened the renewal of the Chinese nation as a whole … Our Chinese people possess great inherent capacities! The more profound is the oppression, the greater is the resistance; since this has been accumulating for a long time, it will surely burst forth quickly.[80]

Mao was reluctant to admit that his principles were rooted in the Classics.[81] "He [Mao] hated Confucianism from the age of eight [saying once] 'There was a Confucian temple in the village, and I wanted nothing more than to burn it to the ground'" (Siao-yu 1973, 33). He turned the antagonism between the "little people" and the "superior men"[82] into class struggle modeled after Marx and socialism. To him, the sinofication of Marxism—that is to say, making certain that in all its manifestations it was imbued with Chinese peculiarities—was essential, so that the Chinese should not become "either Don Quixote or Ah Qs[83]" (Spence 1981, 284).

Mao started the revolution in the countryside and gradually encircled the

urban areas. He was the first revolutionary in history to bring a peasant revolution to fruition. Though there was no lack of Chinese activists who returned home for the sole purpose of modernizing China, they concentrated on reforms in the urban areas, neglecting the majority of China's population in the rural areas. In addition, their inexperience in governing led them to believe that if the cities were reformed, the countryside would follow.

In contrast, Mao understood that the countryside was the safest place to establish a revolutionary base. A crippling war of attrition between the nationalists and the Communists, the Japanese occupation, and the apathy of the peasants forced Mao to resort to unconventional measures. He mobilized the countryside against the landlords and urban intellectuals. He realized that the real danger to China came not from outside forces but from within.

The Zionist revolution, on the other hand, was started outside of Palestine by activists who lived in other parts of the world. This was the first time in history that a revolution was brought to fruition by people who had never lived in their own land. The Zionists felt that they had returned home to build a country, but they met with overwhelming hostility. The British Mandate in Palestine aimed at keeping the Jews dispersed. This in addition to the apathy from the Jews in the Diaspora was the greatest enemy facing Judaism. It forced the Zionists to take drastic measures.

Despite the odds, neither the Zionists nor the Chinese revolutionaries were deterred. They came from a common background, shared a common determination, and strove for similar visions. The Zionists were emancipated Jews who had forsaken the ghetto and orthodoxy to join the world citizenship, and the Chinese nationalists were intellectuals who had forsaken their privilege of residing abroad and returned to participate in an unprecedented historic event in Chinese history.

Though the Zionists believed at the outset that a homeland in Palestine would solve the Jewish problem, they miscalculated the deep roots of anti-Semitism—propounded even by people who professed to know and understand Judaism. The anti-Semites openly and publicly criticized, ridiculed, and humiliated the Jews, who had nowhere to retreat or hide. Under their constant harassment, the Jews could expect little support from the world community, and the Zionists had no illusions that without outside support there would ever be a Jewish homeland or a Jewish state.

The Zionists came to Palestine not to conquer but to build a new nation for the Jews, and at first they assumed that the Palestinian Arabs, "in

finding themselves economically prosperous and reasonably content, would eventually accept minority status in the coming Jewish state" (Laqueur 1972, 268).

The Chinese revolutionaries were educated in both traditional Chinese and Western ways and were determined to achieve their goal of national sovereignty. Foreigners professed to know them but did not understand them. The Chinese revolutionaries, like their Zionist counterparts, were in the minority, hardly a cross-section of the society. Thus, Westerners were surprised when the Chinese revolutionaries demanded a return of everything that China had ever lost to foreigners.

The revolutionaries demanded the revocation of unequal treaties, abolition of the territorial concessions, and return of Chinese authority over mercantile policy. They also envisioned a centralized nation-state, capable both of forcing back imperialists and advancing the country's new aspirations in political, social, economic, and cultural life.

Most puzzling to foreigners, however, was China's total disinterest in maintaining global commercial ties. Western merchants professed to know China and thought that trade was the key to China's entrance into the world community. But they misread the signs that followed the collapse of the imperial system.

From the 1920s to the Japanese occupation in 1937 and until the Communist takeover in 1949, China was in turmoil. First, the Mandate of Heaven was abolished and replaced by a centralized government. The traditional Confucian society was overturned practically overnight, and all foreigners were expelled and their property expropriated on the grounds that it had been stolen from China. Then the literary reforms of the May Fourth Movement (1919) abolished the old classical means of expression, thus giving a stronger voice to the underprivileged rural areas.

Seizing the opportunity, the Communists embraced the countryside and championed their grievances against the urban and Western-supported nationalists. Civil war was unavoidable. The oppressive Japanese occupation also added to the general sentiment that there was no one who cared for China.

The peasants were caught in the middle: the nationalists exploited them, the Japanese subdued them, and the Communists recruited them. Skillfully manipulated by Mao Zedong, the peasants rose against the tyranny of chaos, fought against the Japanese, and ultimately won over the urban

population. Unnoticed by outsiders, China was on a collision course with the West.

Jewish and Chinese culture in modern times have diverged and, at the same time, acted in tandem. Judaism needed the world's goodwill to survive, and China needed her own spiritual strength to withstand the myriad of challenges she faced; the need for the world's goodwill was not among them.

Judaism needed to reflect on the course of the tradition in the Jewish state, while China needed to cleanse the foreign elements from tradition. Two events that changed the course of both cultures constituted the third pair of catastrophes: the Holocaust (1939–1945) and the Great Revolution for a Working-Class Culture (1966–1969).

The Holocaust and the Great Revolution for a Working-Class Culture

Once China is ready to write the history of the 1960s, she will have to face the disconcerting fact that she created her own holocaust under the name "The Great Revolution to Establish a Working-Class Culture" (*wuchan jieji wenhua da geming*), often mistakenly translated as "The Great Cultural Revolution." The Chinese holocaust was not the Nanjing Massacre (see appendix) that China wants the world to remember, but was the Cultural Revolution that China wants the world to forget. It will take a lot of pain and courage to admit that the Cultural Revolution was the homemade Holocaust of the Chinese. The circumstances of the Holocaust and the Cultural Revolution, their backgrounds, objectives, implementation, and conclusions, are too much alike for the similarity to be ignored. The only difference was that the Holocaust was imposed on the Jews, while the Cultural Revolution was sanctioned internally.

The roots of the Holocaust (1939–1945) and the Cultural Revolution (1966–1969) grew from events that had occurred over a century earlier. The Holocaust was the culmination of the long anti-Semitic trends in the West. The Nazis devised a master plan to systematically exterminate the Jews in all Nazi-occupied countries. They made it clear from the outset that they wanted to solve the Jewish question for the last time. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH THE JEWS? ran the headline of a Nazi newspaper (Laqueur 1972, 505). First, they tried to deport the Jews to other countries, but when very few countries

expressed any inclination to accept them, the Nazis methodically isolated the Jews and made them *personas non grata*.

Then the Nazis stripped the Jews of legal rights and thus they became the objects of functional exploitation, undifferentiated from other nonhuman matter in nature. They forced the Jews to undergo a completely new order of human experience; first, they processed the Jews, dehumanized, depersonalized, and finally disposed of them. "For the first time in history, humans beings were processed into matter and the processing began while they were still alive" (Levin 1973, xi). The Nazis even had an official name for it: the Final Solution.

The order to exterminate the Jews came from the highest level of government in Nazi Germany, and it was a policy of the government. The Nazis devoted manpower and resources (transportation, camps, scientific research for the most efficient and methodical way of disposal, etc.) to implement the Final Solution and then executed their plan to systematically eliminate the Jewish race.

The Cultural Revolution was the culmination of a long search for Chinese identity that can be traced to the invasion of Western ideas, technology, and military superiority, which upset the balance of the Confucian society. Ever since, China had been in search of a new way to accommodate both cultures. Neither foreign occupation nor abortive reforms and halfhearted revolutions had changed the spirit of China. To understand the Cultural Revolution, one must see it as an extension of China's century-long struggle to absorb and survive the impact of Western culture.

Until the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese had talked about breaking with the deep-rooted Confucian past. People expressed their desire to expunge foreign influences, to let the country find a solution that would allow China to digest the technology of the West while retaining her own cultural character. China needed to evade the Christian imperialist formula proposed by Europe. Europe still believed in the image of the missionaries' account of China. The missionaries looked at the Chinese as heathens. Businessmen saw China as hundreds of millions of potential customers, while the generals and diplomats viewed the nation through a purely military or strategic assessment. Westerners all made the same mistake: they looked at China from the outside instead of endeavoring to see with Chinese eyes.

The official reason for the Cultural Revolution was to establish a working-class culture, to change China from top to bottom. It was a revolution against the "four olds"—old customs, old habits, old culture, and old thinking—the four elements that often hindered the modernization of China. In the West, the Cultural Revolution was seen as a political purge, a civil war, or a struggle for succession. It was all of these things. It was a movement to stamp Chinese characteristics on the future of China. Its early slogans emphasized nonviolence; everyone in China knew that "You can change a person's skin by hitting him, but you can't change his soul that way" (Hunter 1971, 10). The Cultural Revolution began as a movement to change the people.

The initial stage was depersonalization, followed by public humiliation, and finally re-education. For this purpose, the energy of the youth was unleashed to attack the enemy of the proletariat but often ended up indiscriminately settling old scores against intellectuals, businessmen, Western-educated, missionaries, and any one who stood in the way of the youth gangs.

In structure and intent, these gangs were no different from the Hitler Youth in Nazi Germany. The Hitler Youth were empowered to terrorize the Jews at will. They were organized and fully supported by the state; they were the law. Their task was to force the population into submission and, parallel to that, to dehumanize and publicly humiliate the Jews, gypsies, Communists, and other undesirables. Ultimately, the undesirables were shipped like cattle to concentration camps. These were the *untemenchen*, the sub humans, and enemies of the New Order.

Akin to the Hitler Youth were the Red Guards in China, who were loosely organized and supported by the local branches of the Communist Party. They employed similar tactics to those of the Hitler Youth: keep the enemy off balance, degrade them, humiliate them publicly, and then send them to re-education camps. When killing occurred—and it occurred in large numbers—it was more out of neglect, indifference, and self-importance. Mobs of Red Guards hauled the "reactionaries" through humiliating public displays, often accompanied by beating, in complete disregard for the health or safety of the victims. Medical care was not available; most of the medical staff were labeled "reactionaries" and were not permitted to practice medicine.

The Red Guards often acted against their own parents, relatives,

elders, and teachers; their word was law. The government did not encourage such acts but did not discourage them either. Those labeled “enemies of the proletariat,” reactionaries, and feudal thinkers were purged and declared enemies of New China.

Akin to the Jews in the Holocaust, millions of the old-guard Chinese revolutionaries were systematically stripped of their basic rights, dehumanized, depersonalized, and shipped to labor camps. The victims were first denounced, then isolated, and ultimately viciously persecuted. This system was so well coordinated that despite the seemingly chaotic stages and uncontrolled masses, China neither degenerated into a civil war nor became weakened. On the contrary, China emerged from the Cultural Revolution spiritually stronger and in full control of her destiny, though physically insecure. Such feelings had also resonated with the Jews in the aftermath of the Holocaust: they emerged physically shattered but spiritually determined to remind the civilized world that this must never happen again.

Chapter 9: China and Israel

The Jewish state and the new China were born from the ashes of catastrophes. The aftermath of the Holocaust led to the establishment of the state of Israel, and the Cultural Revolution led to the establishment of the new China. These events left significant scars on both cultures, and both underwent profound changes. But the question that we will now consider is whether Judaism and China are still bound by the ancient cultural link of yin and yang.

On a superficial level, the changes were stages of political evolution, but the culture remained the same. Geographically, China has remained a large country with secure borders, and politically she was at the periphery of world conflict. Culturally, China is still a mystery to the world, exerting little influence outside of her borders. That is about to change. On the other side of the continent is Israel, a new country that has carved out a small piece of land with insecure borders. Politically, she is at the center of conflict in the world, and culturally, Judaism became less universal, focusing on issues pertaining to the Jews in Israel and the Diaspora.

Beyond these fundamental similarities, Israel and the new China had to find a balance between the past, the present, and the future. In the past, the Jews searched the Torah for solutions. They were so absorbed in studying the scriptures and oral law that these writings became historical guidelines rather than prophecies and visions. Though the oral law served as a guide to the mysteries of the Torah, it failed to predict the catastrophes that befell the Jewish people. The divine prophecy that God “humbled you and tested you” (Deut. 8:2) could never be accurately gauged.

Three major catastrophes came upon the Jews; none of them could have been predicted by mortals. Each was different in scope, intensity, and objective, and it was unlikely that they could have been repetitions of any previous event. The Exile dispersed the Jews, the Expulsion from Spain divided them, and the Holocaust almost eliminated them. What next?

China also had to balance the past with the present, and based on the past, find solutions to the future. The Liji guided China through three catastrophes that, as in the case of the Jews, were unpredictable and beyond human comprehension. The Unification in 221 BCE created a unified nation,

the Mongol conquest (1268–1379) intensified China's dislike of foreigners, and the Cultural Revolution (1966–1969) purified China of foreign elements. What next?

Though the future is beyond our abilities to forecast, perhaps the ancient Jewish prophets had a message for China and the ancient Chinese sages had a message for Israel. Israel was created in 1948, and the factors that dominated the historical landscape of the Middle East compelled her to be inclusive. The new Israeli government had to consider all the competing visions that vied for a voice in the future of Judaism. Governing Israel became an inherent problem; the nation needed to balance the demands of both religion and secular life. From the ultra-orthodox who refused to recognize the state to the reform movement that modernized Judaism to the political Zionists who wanted a secular state based on a constitution, Israel had to accommodate conflicting currents. Guaranteeing religious freedom to all and a safe haven for the Jews in the Diaspora were two conditions that were nonnegotiable.

In addition, Israel was in constant flux; she had to accommodate the Jewish immigrants that came from different parts of the world, bringing with them local customs, ceremonies, and rituals. The only thing the immigrants shared was the fact that they were Torah-abiding Jews. Israel became the catalyst of the new Jewish culture confronting old stereotypes of Judaism, and at the same time, the Jewish state provided a safe heaven for all denominations. Not since biblical times had the Jews faced such a task.

After an interval of two thousand years, the Jews reclaimed their country and started to rebuild from where the judges and the monarchy left off in biblical times. The books of the Torah describe Israel's transition from a tribal grouping to a united kingdom and record the deeds of the tribal leaders or judges. The judges, or civic leaders, led the people in battle, took charge of one or more tribes in peacetime, and ruled Israel for over four hundred years.[84] Idolatry was rife in the land, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes. Repeatedly, Elohim punished the sinful Israelites and then saved them by raising another judge. "And when Elohim raised them up judges, then Elohim was with the judge, and saved them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judges" (Judges 2:18).

This period was followed by the Jewish monarchy, when Israel exhibited cycles of moral progress and regression. Israel was divided into two kingdoms, one in the north and one in the south, and pagan rites presented a

problem. Prophets and kings were in almost constant conflict: the former assailed the paganism that the royalty favored, with all its attendant immorality, and further insisted that the king and the people practice morality and serve Elohim in accordance with His commandments. Rare were the "righteous" kings who sought to purge all pagan elements from the worship of Elohim.

The international political scene also profoundly affected the two tiny kingdoms of Israel, for they were in virtually constant peril from the powerful surrounding nations. Finally, the northern kingdom was engulfed by the Assyrians in 722 BCE, though the Judean kingdom persisted in its struggle until 586 BCE, when it was overthrown by Babylonia. The kingdoms of Israel vanished, but Judaism survived.

The Jews survived because they elevated the divine laws to inspire religious-national zeal that was unparalleled in history—with the sole possible exception of China. Both cultures taught that the cultivation of spiritual and mental prowess was superior to any physical force. Pursuing a path of learning, Judaism would not only survive the might of the sword but outlast it too. Here the path of the Jews and the Chinese intersected. The Jews rested their faith in the Covenant, the words of Elohim, while the Chinese rested their faith in virtue (*de*) and the code of conduct (*li*). Utopian in principle, their teachings equally prescribed the fate of their people.

Confucius taught:

> Without the rule of propriety [li], respectfulness becomes laborious bustle, carefulness becomes timidity, boldness becomes insubordination, and straightforwardness becomes rudeness. When the rulers are firm with their close associates, people are inspired to behave as humans. (Analects 8:2)

In this respect, he agreed with his contemporary, Laozi (604–531 BCE), the founder of the Daoist school of thought, that "those who rule the world with Dao, do not conquer the world with military might" (Daodejing #30). Conflicts should be settled according to the proper conduct (li), and if everybody knows his position in society, there will be peace and tranquility in the empire. Here Confucius advocated something that was new at the time: the development of mental prowess over physical.

When the new China was created in 1949, conditions compelled her to be exclusive: all non-Chinese elements were excluded and replaced with traditional values. The Mandate of Heaven was abolished, and new competing views vied for attention. Governing the new China became an inherent problem. She was a huge country with an almost uncontrollable growth in population and an equally irreconcilable division between the rural and the urban areas. The urban areas were infested with foreign ideas, while the countryside still lived in the previous century.

The clash between the old and the new came to the fore as traditionalists tried to find new meanings in the Classics and the revolutionaries wanted to abolish all the traditional values. The only common tie was that both wanted to retain the basic family relationships. The Five Relationships—between sovereign and subject, father and son, elder brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend—were nonnegotiable. What was negotiable, however, was the order of preferences in these relations.

The new China elevated the first relation to precedence over the rest of the relations. Loyalty to the state superseded the other four relations. Prioritizing the Five Relationships restored the Confucian virtue of learning—not the traditional learning but the learning of the new doctrine. This new doctrine was based on strong nationalistic sentiments. Instead of reciting the Four Books, people recited the little red book of Mao.[85] Mao talked about traditional Chinese values veiled in Communist terminology, but in essence, he expunged everything that was non-Chinese in nature. He was in search of a vision between modernity and tradition, with emphasis on Chinese characteristics.

This quest for a new Dao emulated the conditions that had prevailed during the Warring States period, from about the fifth to the third century BCE. That period was characterized by unprecedented political, social, economic, and intellectual changes that can only be compared to the rise of communism in modern times. During the Warring States period, the kingdoms found it increasingly difficult to maintain the old system and adapt to the needs of the times. Conquest was the buzzword of the era, and ultimately, seven states emerged as winners of the annexation game.

The conditions were chaotic, and the time was ripe for reform. When the dust settled, the state of Qin emerged victorious and immediately instituted legal reforms, restored the Mandate of Heaven, abolished the

holdings of large landlords, redistributed the land, and increased the role of the military. “Enrich the country and increase its military power” was the motto of the times (Zhao and Zhao 2003, 226). Unprecedented social and economic changes accompanied these reforms, and China became one of the most advanced nations on earth.

In international relations, Chinese history had shown that foreign intervention could last only for a century or two before it would be replaced by the old tenets of tradition. In modern times, China adopted a strategy that had worked in the past. Just as she absorbed Buddhism in antiquity and turned it into a native Chinese religion, China today has taken measures to attract Western materialism, hoping to forge a new culture based on a blend of tradition and technology. Will it work? The absorption of Buddhism required spiritual devotion, while modern Western technology requires the acquisition of material things. Spirituality was the common denominator that saved both China and Judaism, and the latest catastrophes, the Holocaust and the Cultural Revolution, showed that material wealth could be temporary.

Both Israel and the new China underwent enormous political and economic changes. Israel had to think defensively and build up a military to safeguard the small country. External threats compelled her to engage in four major wars (1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973) in addition to the constant skirmishes with Palestinians and the neighboring states. Internally, she needed to accommodate the secular and religious demands. Despite these challenges, Israel became the focal point of the Jews in the Diaspora, who started to see the Jewish state as the answer to the Jewish problem in the world.

China had to think defensively too. But her defense mechanism was geared toward internal reforms and not toward foreign threats. Thus, she experimented with collectivization, initially modeled on Russian *kolhoz*, though later it became more akin to the *kibbutz* in Israel. Peasants worked the land and turned over the product to the central system for distribution.

This was followed by a phase of self-criticism that culminated in the Cultural Revolution, followed by a reversionary campaign against the Gang of Four.[86] The period of turmoil gradually stabilized during the period of the Four Modernizations in 1978—agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology were brought to modern standards, with heavy emphasis on the last.

But China's drive to achieve technological equality with the West came at the price of a self-inflicted Diaspora. Many Chinese have been leaving the motherland with the intent of making their fortunes elsewhere. Once abroad, they often form their own enclaves within larger cities and keep interaction with outsiders limited to minor daily activities. Socially, the overseas Chinese community mimics the *shtetl* mentality that dominated Jewish life in the nineteenth century.

At this crossroad, we find Judaism interlocked with China in a cultural yin and yang relation. The zenith of Jewish culture is in the past. Israel is the sole nation to raise and carry the flag of Judaism, and the only one where being chosen means that *all under heaven* is equal among equals; *all under heaven* accepts and is accepted by the family of nations; and *all under heaven* treats and is treated equally.

It appears that this was on the mind of the Chinese sages when they said:

> "All under Heaven" is not one man's domain. "All under heaven" means just that, *all* under heaven. Anyone who benefits[87] with all the people under heaven will gain the world. Anyone who monopolizes the benefits will lose the world …. Being capable of sharing these in common with the people is true humanity. Wherever there is true humanity, All under Heaven will give their allegiance…. The Virtuous created tools for humans to survive … Wherever there is Virtue, Dao resides, and where Dao resides, all under heaven will give their allegiance [to Virtue]. (Sawyer 1966, 83; Sima 1964, ch. 32)

The zenith of the Chinese culture is in the past, but its influence is in the future. More and more nations will be studying China, and inevitably, they will make enormous efforts to understand her. Chinese culture will come under intense scrutiny that will force the Chinese to explain, and even to defend, their heritage. Perhaps China will succeed where the Judaism has failed. It appears that that was on the mind of prophet Isaiah when he said:

> Whom will He teach knowledge,
> and to whom will He explain the message? …
> To men of strange lips and with alien tongue;

Elohim will speak to these people (Isa. 28:9–12).

Appendices

Appendix 1: The Nanjing Massacre and the Holocaust

There are efforts in China today to equate the Jewish Holocaust (1939–1945) with the Great Nanjing Massacre of 1937. Chinese scholars and Chinese literature on Judaism do not fail to compare these two events. Even the displays at the *Datusha* [88] Museum in Nanjing were arranged to replicate the Holocaust Museum in Washington DC. But a closer analysis reveals discrepancies between the two events that render them quite different. They differ not only in semantics, but also in background, purpose, method, and execution.

Datusha means “Great Massacre” in Chinese, and the latest Chinese dictionaries define it as “Holocaust.” Even the Chinese version of *Encyclopedia Judaica*[89] referenced the term “Holocaust” under the heading of Datusha. But does the Chinese term Datusha means Holocaust?

On December 13, 1937, the Japanese entered Nanjing, the capital of Nationalist China, and within weeks of occupation, the military randomly killed over 250,000 Chinese civilian men, women, children, and babies for pleasure or for whatever reason. They used the bodies of Chinese people for bayonet target practice, or sword practice, or burned them just out of boredom. The massacre was so cruel that even the Nazis were horrified by the brutality of it, proclaiming it to be the work of “bestial machinery” (Chang 1998, 6). The Chinese simply named it the Great Massacre, *Datusha.*

The order to commit the atrocities came from the local Japanese military garrison headquarters in Nanjing. When the Japanese command realized that about three hundred thousand Chinese troops were about to surrender, they faced a dilemma: what to do with them? On the one hand, there was the practical problem:

> The captives could not be fed, so they had to be destroyed. Killing them would not only eliminate the food problem but diminish the possibility of retaliation. Moreover, dead enemies could not form up into guerilla forces. (Chang 1998, 41)

On the other hand, there was the code of honor of the warrior (*bushido*, in Japanese) that was etched in the mind of any Japanese: to die in the service of one's lord was the greatest honor a *samurai* warrior could achieve in his lifetime. So harsh was this code that the most notable characteristic was the moral imperative that adherents commit suicide if ever they failed to honorably meet obligations of military service—often with the highly ceremonial ritual of *hara-kiri* (*seppuku*), in which the warrior met death by unflinchingly disemboweling himself in front of witnesses (Chang 1988, 20).

The Japanese felt so strongly about this code that they could not understand how an entire army, or a city of half a million people, could surrender. Surrender was not in the Japanese vocabulary. Fighting to death was what the Japanese expected of themselves as well as from their enemies.

Despite the horror of the events, the Nanjing Massacre was an isolated incident that surpassed any other atrocities committed by the Japanese, and it lacked the ingredients of a systematic extermination of an entire race. The Holocaust was a systematic extermination corresponding to the Chinese term *xitong datusha* "systematic massacre". But Xitong datusha is as unimaginable to the Chinese as the Holocaust was to the Jews. No one could have imagined building machinery devoted to the sole purpose of eliminating a race just because it was that race. No Chinese could have ever entertained the notion that a force in the universe was there for the sole purpose of exterminating the Chinese race just because they were Chinese. And that what the word x*itong datusha*, systematic massacre means to a Chinese similar to what the *Holocaust* means to a Jew.

Appendix 2: Comparative Cultural Table

	China	Judaism
Deity	Shangdi, Lord on High, bestows the Mandate of Heaven on the House of Zhou, the future Han Chinese.	Elohim chooses Abraham to be the first Patriarch (ca. 1800 BCE). His son, Jacob was renamed Israel, the future of the Jews.
The Mandate The Covenant	The holder of the Mandate becomes the Son of Heaven, and the people become His sons.	Jacob's children become the Twelve Tribes, and their descendants the chosen people.
Sacred Writings	China accepts the Book of Rites (*Liji*) as the code of Chinese conduct. The original version comprised three books: the *Yili* (Book of Art: rules for conduct of domestic and family life); the *Liji* (Book of Rites: Book of Filial Piety, the Book of Regulations and Conduct, and the Seven Grounds for Divorce); the *Zhouli* (the Rites of Zhou: the History of the House of Zhou). Liji was never canonized.	The Jews accept the Torah as their Covenant with Elohim. The Torah comprises Five Books: Genesis (Book of Worshiping Gods), Exodus (book of Redemption), Leviticus (book of Priests), Numbers (book of Census), and Deuteronomy (repetition of the Law). Later additions to the Torah were the Prophets and the Scriptures, which together make up the Old Testament.

	Later additions were the Five Books: *Yijing* (Book of Changes—divination), *Shijing* (Book of Songs), *Shujing* (Book of History), *Qunqiu* (Spring and Autumn, a.k.a. Rise and Fall of the Zhou Dynasty), and *Zuoquan* (The Records of Zuo). Two reconstructed chapters of the Liji, the *Daxue* (the Great Learning) and *Zhongyong* (the Doctrine of the Mean), were compiled together with the Analects of Confucius and the Book of Mencius into what became known as the Four Books.	The Torah, Prophets and Scriptures (Bible) were canonized in the sixth century BCE, and no new addition was permitted. Additional literature from the same period was recorded in the Apocrypha.
Division Unification	China is divided among the Warring States.	The Jews are united under the monarchy.
The Great Wall The Temple	China started to build the Great Wall to keep the "barbarians" out.	Solomon built the Temple, a permanent place for the Holy Ark.
Wisdom Literature	The wisdom literature of Confucius and Laozi.	The wisdom literature of King Solomon reached the shores of India and China.
Daodejing The Proverbs	Laozi wrote the Daodejing, the Book of Ways and Virtues, or	Solomon composed his three thousand proverbs and one thousand and one

	the five thousand characters.	songs.
First Catastrophe	• The first catastrophe: unification of China, 221 BCE • Anti-intellectual campaign	• The first catastrophe: Babylonian captivity and exile (586–516 BCE) • Start of the Diaspora
Intellectual Activity	• A burst of intellectual activity. Birth of the Han learning—reconstruction of the ancient canons (206 BCE–220 CE) • China becomes an empire under the Han • Start of Confucian learning	• A burst of intellectual activity. Birth of the Mishna and the oral law, commentaries on the Torah • Jews scatter after captivity • Start of the Talmud Period (ca. 300)
Buddhism Christianity Islam	• Buddhism challenges Confucianism • Buddhism gains inroad in China • China adopts anti-Buddhism measures • Buddhism persecution and expulsion from China (ca. 860–1000 CE)	• Christianity challenges Judaism • Persecutions of the Jews • Jews adopt anti-Christian measures • Islam challenges Judaism (ca. 700–1300 CE)
	• The Golden Age of Reason (tenth through thirteenth century CE)	• Golden Age of Jewish Thought (seventh through thirteenth century CE)

The Golden Age Zhu Xi Rambam	• Revival of orthodoxy: Neo-Confucianism • Zhu Xi (1126–1200), Commentator to the Classics	• Revival of Hebrew under Islam • Rambam (1120–1202), Commentator to the Torah
Second Catastrophe	• Second Chinese catastrophe: Mongol conquest (1279–1368) • China becomes prisoner in its own land and develops a deep mistrust of foreigners • Revival of Confucian orthodoxy: the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)	• Second catastrophe: expulsion from Spain (1492) • Jews become stateless citizens and segregate into ghettos, *shtetl* • Return to biblical roots: Hasidism
Anti Foreign Sentiments Anti Semitism The Mystics	• Rise of anti-foreign sentiments in China (1600–1900) • Messianic movement of Hong Xiuquan (1814–1864)	• Rise of anti-Semitism in Europe • Messianic movement of Shabbatai Zvi (1626–1676)
Zhishi Fenzi Maskilim	Beginning of the reform movement: Kang Youwei The Self-Awakening, zhishi fenzi	Beginning of Zionism: Herzl The Haskala, enlightenment, maskilim

Nationalism	• Rise of Chinese nationalism: the May Fourth Movement (1919) • China in search of stability (1911–1949)	• Rise of Jewish political nationalism: The Balfour Declaration (1917) • Jewish struggle for a homeland in Palestine (1917–1948)

Third Catastrophe	The third catastrophe: the Great Revolution for a Working-Class Culture (1966–1969)	The third catastrophe: the Holocaust (1939–1945)
China and Israel	The New China: Communism (1949)	The State of Israel (1948)

Addendum

Encounters between Israelites and China in Biblical Times

by Tiberiu Weisz

(*Reprinted in Asian Jewish Life #10*)

I can barely walk nowadays in the streets of Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing or even Kaifeng without meeting another Jew or an Israeli. Jews have "invaded" the Middle Kingdom, followed by the Israelis who found that China is one of the few countries that still welcomes Jews, or at least, they do not perceive the Chinese to be anti-Semitic or prejudiced. Back home, when I open a Jewish paper, I increasingly find more articles of the adventure of an Israeli, another Jew or a story of a Chabadnic in the land of the Middle Kingdom. The common theme is that the Chinese think that the Jews are rich, smart and good at business. One blogger, however, pointed out that this attitude comes more from misinformation, lack of knowledge and ignorance, which historically turned into anti Jewish attitude and ultimately anti-Semitism.

There is some truth in the blogger's observation. While reading the Chinese language media, I can hardly say that they publish positive articles about the Jews or Israel. While it is true that the English language media praises the Jews and writes what (foreign) readers want to hear, the coverage in the local media is a completely different story. The Chinese use the same phrases but with negative connotation. The general Chinese press portrays the Jews as agents of the corrupt Western system, and Israel as a puppet of the United States. More troubling to me personally is that articles published in the Chinese academic media often contain a paragraph or two inserted by either a censor or a party cadre. These "additions" are

not flattering to the Jews nor to Judaism, they rather leave a bitter taste in the readers' mouth.

As a Jew, I can relate to these controversial writings. Jews, on the one hand, are used to airing sharply different opinions and having heated debates. Such arguments have defined Judaism since the time of the sages in early Talmudic period. On the other hand, as a scholar of China of over 35 years, I know that contradiction, especially between the old and the new, shapes the Chinese attitude towards the rest of the world. Traditionally, the Chinese believe that opposing forces of positive and negative work in tandem to create a balance, or as the Chinese say nothing happens without the interaction of *yin* and *yang*. Such interaction (between *yin* and *yang*) has also created a Chinese culture that practices Confucian ethics. Within those ethical standards changes occur due to conflicts, contradictions, and opposites. Accordingly, Chinese culture is the *yin* part of the cultural equation, yet there must be another culture equal in endurance, sustainability and depth to complement the equation. Is Judaism the *yang* to China's *yin*?

I dealt with this question in depth in my book *The Covenant and the Mandate of Heaven*, but here I just want to bring up some selective highlights to engage the readers. One of the most basic and fascinating questions that I would like to address is: Was there any connection between Judaism and China in biblical times? Both Jews and Chinese scholars have tried to answer this question, with each side emphasizing their point of view. Jewish scholars relied on the Judaic sources, while the Chinese drew inspiration from Chinese sources. Evidently, these studies were too lopsided, either too partial to Judaism or China. What is lacking is a study that weights both sources equally. That would require a facilitator well versed in both languages and cultures, and equally important, to be able to elucidate the events in dual historical context. With my background in both Judaism (raised in the orthodox tradition),

and a professor of Classical Chinese, I took it upon myself to try to answer this question. I must admit, that at times I had my own reservations. Thanks to one of my colleagues who encouraged me to embark on this study, and to my wife who was with me all these years that I spent on this research.

Did the Israelites know about China and vice versa China about the Israelites in biblical times? First, let's look at this question from a Jewish point of view. The most common and simple answer would be that the Prophet Isaiah (8th century BCE) was the first to mention China: "Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim" (49:12). Since Biblical scholars could not find additional biblical reference to China, they placed the land of Sinim somewhere in central Turkey of today. Others translated Sinim as "from the East". Unsatisfactory as they were, these explanations were accepted. I must admit that I was uneasy about these interpretations (especially the latter one) but due to lack of a better alternative, I put the issue to rest.

What changed my mind was that I came across a Chinese text that located the place where the Chinese military brought the finest warhorses. So you could ask: What is the connection between horses and Judaism? The answer is simple, both the Chinese and King Solomon (10th century BCE) bought the finest warhorses in the small kingdom of Ferghana, (Northern Afghanistan today) at a place called Kucha. The people of Ferghana were the prime breeders of warhorses and they brought their horses to Kucha, the marketplace for "heavenly horses" in ancient times to sell them to traders from far away places.

Initially Kucha was a small post off the main Silk Road but due to the horse trade it gradually became a geographic crossroad of the Silk Route. The finest warhorses of Kucha were in great demand

and when King Solomon received fine horses as gifts from visiting foreigners (I Kings 10:24; 2 Chr. 9:28) he was so fond of them (I Kings 4:26) that he dispatched traders to Kveh (Kua) where the horses came with a high price (I Kings 10:28).

Where was Kveh/Kua (Hebrew letters of קוה) ? Was it in Central Anatolia (Turkey) as most Biblical scholars believed or was it the Hebrew name of Kucha? Incidentally, both biblical literature and Chinese literature refer to the same market place bearing the same name. I attribute the different pronunciation to the difference between Chinese and Hebrew languages. Linguistically, Kucha and Kveh/Kua contain the same syllables peculiar to their own language. Considering the myriad of traders, travelers, adventures, monks and others of different background, speaking different dialects, communicating in any way they could to make themselves understood, the Chinese word of Kucha could have been easily been heard and transliterated as Kveh/Kua in Hebrew. Kucha or Kveh/Kua was the place where Chinese horse buyers and traders from the Israelite Kingdom of Solomon had probably come in the earliest contact. Gradually it became a very important trading post where people of every creed, traders, pilgrims, adventurers and monks met and exchanged goods and stories. By the second century CE, Kucha had a population of 150,000 people, and three centuries later its population doubled.

In essence Chinese annals had solved a biblical mystery! The Chinese records complemented the biblical information, and in addition, provided us a timeframe of when and where the Israelites could have come in contact with the Chinese. Based on this information, the Israelites could have heard about China some two hundred years before the Prophet Isaiah mentioned “the land of Sinim”.

Biblical Influence in Chinese literature

by Tiberiu Weisz

(*Reprinted from Asian Jewish Life, #11*)

What bound Judaism and China into a seemingly yin and yang cultural relationship? The more I have researched these two cultures, the more they seemed to revolve around the perpetual changes created by yin and yang. Initially, I thought that the key might lie in mastering the Chinese language. But, once I felt proficient in Chinese (I was already proficient in Hebrew) I realized that even the two languages were following the yin yang pattern. Both languages are built on a similar system, the root words. Hebrew uses three letters for the "root" called *shoresh*, while Chinese uses 214 basic "radicals" called *bushou*. But the similarities end here.

In Hebrew we form words by adding to the "root" words either with declinations of parts of speech or by conjugating the verbs in various tenses. Hebrew has a complex grammar. In contrast, Chinese is a very simple language. It is based on seven basic strokes to form 214 "radicals" and a combination of radicals with the basic strokes forms complex characters. For all practical purposes, Chinese has no grammar. And herein lies the difficulty. While the Hebrew grammar tells us "who, what and when", in Chinese we have to deduce these questions from the context. Such ambiguity makes any Chinese text, especially ancient writings, very difficult to translate. Historically, Chinese characters changed meaning significantly during their long history and when reading

Chinese texts one has to know in what period of time it was written.

It is not surprising then, that when Chinese and Israelites came in contact in antiquity, they did not have anything in common, and knew nothing about each other's culture. Israelites might have known about the "land of Sinim" from the Prophet Isaiah. But for the Chinese, Israelites were just one of the unidentified tribes of the uncivilized *yi* "barbarian" tribes. In biblical times, the Chinese called every non-Chinese "barbarians". In this respect, they did not distinguish between the Mongols or Huns raiders. Nor did they distinguish between the peaceful tribes and settles, traders, and monks who occasionally intermixed with the Chinese in the north and west of China. Chinese annals portrayed the "barbarians" as raggedy looking, long red hair, dirty, unshaven and with repulsive body odor.

Yet, a sharp -eyed Chinese sage had indeed described in one sentence a tribe with a strange custom. He talked about a tribe that fasted, bathed and cleaned themselves before praying to God. This description puzzled Chinese and Western scholars alike. Who they were eluded an answer for a long time. It puzzled me too, but for a different reason. The description seemed familiar, I just could not identify where I had seen that before. Only when I worked on the translation of *The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions* and came upon a similar Chinese sentence, did I realize that those exact words originated with a very influential Chinese sage.

Who was that sage?

In my book *The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions*, I traced the journey of a group of exiled Levites and *Cohanim* (Priests) from Babylon (6th

century BCE) to the Kingdom of Ferghana (North Afghanistan today) to the Western Regions and ultimately their migration into China in the second century BCE. The migration from exile to the Western Regions took perhaps as long as four hundred years. Actually, the exiles themselves were not the original settlers in China but the descendants of their descendants were. They were sighted at the outskirts of China in second century BCE, and accepted the Chinese offer to come and settle in the Western Regions in return for the protection of the Chinese. The Western Regions (*xiyu* in Chinese) stretched from northern Afghanistan to *Dunhuang* (the Pass in Chinese) in the northeast of Gansu Province today. Here ended the main trade route, the so called the Silk Road that ran from Syria to Central Asia, to Northern India, and to the Western Regions. The Western Regions served as a buffer zone between China proper and the Mongol/ Hun raiders who frequently invaded and plundered China. To avert or minimize the impact of these raids, the Chinese encouraged "barbarian" tribes to settle at the outskirts of China in the Western Regions.

We know very little about these Israelites who lived in the Western Regions, at the outskirts of China for centuries. Most of our information was based on what the Chinese Jews inscribed in stone, which was the topic of my book *The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions.* Amazingly, after many centuries in isolation, the Jews in China (Kaifeng) still observed the precepts of the Torah!

Journeying in the vast desert land of the Western Regions, were two Chinese sages who had great influence on China. During their travels they might have come in contact with Israelites, and only a careful reading of their writing hinted at such an encounter. One of the sages was Mencius (372-289 BCE). His influence was second only to Confucius. His biography mentioned that late in his life he

left China and had spent twenty years “beyond the Pass” in the Western Regions. We know very little of his whereabouts or what he did. Most of the information is deduced from his writings.

Apparently, he encountered a tribe during his journey that “fasted and bathed, and then they sacrificed to Shangdi. ” Shangdi was the Chinese Almighty equal only to Elohim. Mencius, like most Chinese of his time, did not have a high opinion of the “barbarians” and this tribe was no exception. His exact words were rather unflattering. He said: “[If] *Xizi* had been covered in such a filth [alternative translation: “with filthy head dress/clothes?], people would hold their noses when passing by. Although [those] people were ugly, if they fasted and bathed, then they could sacrifice to Shangdi. “

It is not coincidental that Mencius used the word *xizi* (pronounced shee-tze). It means: “Son of the West.” And here lies the controversy. Who was *Xizi*? The Chinese suggested that it was the name of Lady *Xi*. But Lady Xi was female and the suffix *zi* (son, master) would indicate a male. The Chinese offered a simple solution; they replaced the character *zi* with the character *shi* (clan) thus clearing the name for a female name. This explanation is plausible, though I think it is far fetched. Alternatively, Mencius might have used the word *Xizi* as a derogatory term for the tribe that fasted and purified themselves before sacrificing to Shangdi in the Western Region.

Incidentally, the above description coincided with a biblical ceremony performed by the Levites (Numbers 8:21) and *Cohanim* (priest, Leviticus 16:3-4) during the Temple period: “Wash yourselves, cleanse yourselves, put your evil deeds out of my sight!” before sacrificing. Reinforcing this commandment was the

Prophet Isaiah (1:16) who reminded the Levites and *Cohanim* (sons of Aaron) to purify and cleanse themselves before making their offerings to Elohim: “For this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you, of all your sins before the Lord. And when the priests and the people… hear the name of the Elohim come from the mouth of the high priest, in sanctity and purity, they bow down and prostrate themselves”

Evidently during his travels to the Western Region, Mencius came upon a tribe that according to his description followed almost identically the rites of Israelites priests. Perhaps this was the first sighting of Israelites in the vicinity of China as early as the 4th century BCE!

Biblical Influence on Daoism

While Mencius left us a description of an Israelite tribe, another Chinese sage had displayed biblical influence in his writing. The legendary Laozi (6th century BCE), the founder of Daoism, better known in the West for his mystical *Book of the Way and Virtue* (*Daodejing*) wrote about topics that would had been more familiar to an Israelite than to a Chinese person at that time.

Laozi spent twenty years traveling in the Western Regions. Legend says that when he reached the Pass (*Dunhuang* today), Yinxi, the Keeper of the Pass, asked him to write a book. Evidently, Laozi obliged and wrote the *Daodejing* a five thousand-character book of wisdom that rivals only the bible in its depth and wisdom. Whether or not this legend is true is beside the point, what is important is that the *Daodejing* has greatly impacted China. Even though it has been translated into almost every language in the world, each translation is more of an interpretation than a translation. The *Daodejing* is extremely difficult to translate, if not impossible. Its

language and concepts can be hardly matched in any other language.

Essentially, the *Daodejing* is full of concepts that would delight, and at the same time challenge, any biblical scholar. They would have to face text like: “Dao is [a] Dao but not [the] Dao, Name is [a] name, but not [the] Name… “ or : “Dao is One…(we) see it, but it is unseen, it is called Invisible; (we) listen to it, but it is unhearable, it is called Inaudible; (we) touch it, but it is unreachable, it is called Intangible”(ch. 14).
A simple translation of Dao is the Way. Yet, we in the West have no single word that is equal to the Chinese *Dao*. Even though some translators translated it as the Way, others as Heaven, and yet others as God, disappointingly, none of these terms is equal to the Chinese Dao. Invariably we still wrestle with the basic questions: What is Dao? Or, how did Laozi come up with the idea of monotheism? Or, better yet, where did Laozi hear about “the land of milk and honey”?

I will focus on the last item. Daoism was both new and strange to the Chinese in the 6th century BCE. At the time different schools of thought fought for the mind of the people. There were so many ideas vying for followers, that the Chinese called them the “hundred schools” of thoughts. Most of these schools faded from the Chinese mind and only Daoism and Confucianism prevailed. Confucianism dealt with government and ethics; while the *Daodejing* dealt with mysticism, monotheism and one chapter dealt with, …well, nobody is sure.

Unusual in style and content was chapter 80 of the *Daodejing*. Due to the lack of details about Laozi, both Chinese and Western historians thought that this chapter reflected his political ideology.

Yet, it is not clear what his political philosophy was, let alone the source of this chapter. We only know for a fact, that the conditions described in this chapter were non-existent in China at the time.

It described: "… a small country with few people that makes weapons but do not use them… Although they have ships and carriages they do not ride them. Though they have armor and soldiers, they do not display them… They sweetened their food, adorned their clothes, were content in their homes and delighted in their customs… people grew old and died of old age." In other words, Laozi described the Chinese version of the "land of milk and honey."

There is no doubt that Laozi had come in contact with "barbarian" tribes during his travels in the Western Region, where he might have heard stories of such a country. He probably heard a story of a "land of milk and honey" (Exodus 33:3; Deut. 27:3) that in the Chinese version in his book became a county where people sweetened their food. Both milk and honey were luxuries for the few in China, even though milk was not commonly consumed. Such a country according Laozi was a peaceful place where "people sweeten their food, they do not engage in wars… they live in prosperity, grow old and die of old age. " Realistically, such conditions did not exist in China at the time, and I think that in this chapter, Laozi described a utopian country about which he might have heard during his travels.

Furthermore, the description of "the small country that made weapons but do not use them…" resembled the conditions prevalent in Jerusalem at the time of King Solomon (c.a. 960 BCE). Solomon built the Temple with labor that had no blood on their hands, he encamped his army in Jerusalem to discourage

aggression; his ships were manned by non-Israelites and reached the shores of India. People of Israel lived in peace and prosperity (1Kings 9:26).

It is evident that chapter 80 of the *Daodejing* differs substantially from the rest of the book. But if we read this chapter in a historical context of both ancient China and Israel, we can see that biblical stories had been circulating in Central Asia in the form of oral tradition, and some of them had made into the ancient Chinese literature.

***Derch Eretz* and the Confucian Way:**

Without the Confucian Way there would be no fundamentals of Chinese ethics, and without Derech Eretz, there would be no Torah
By Tiberiu Weisz

(*Reprinted from Asian Jewish Life #12*)

Long before China turned to Confucianism (2nd century BCE) and long before the Oral Law/*hallacha* (3rd century BCE-) became the standard in Judaism, both cultures drew inspiration from ancient oral traditions. Those traditions were the cornerstone of China and Judaism and were known as the Confucian Way and *Derech Eretz* respectively.

What was the Confucian Way? What was *Derech Eretz* (The Way of the Land)? Semantically, both terms meant the same: conduct, customs and behavior. They both served the same purpose: to preserve the traditional ways and realign them with contemporary times. They were both similar in general terms but differed in particulars. The Way of the Land acted in tandem with Divine command, while the Chinese Way followed the yin and yang pattern.

The Chinese started to reexamine the ideals of Confucius (c.a. 551-479 BCE) after a rather brutal unification in 221 BCE. Frightened by the possibility of a future recurrence of such atrocities, the Chinese leaned towards a more humane way of dealing with social and political issues. These ideas eventually became so entrenched in the society that they became known as the Confucian Way of the Yin (Chinese) culture. In principle, they were very simple; in rites, they very complex, and in application, they were widely practiced. Despite its broad appeal, the tenets of Confucian Way were not binding; they were merely considered advice and suggestions.

Not so in Judaism. The tenets of the Torah bound the entire Jewish world. No matter where a community was located physically, the Torah bound them to Judaism. Even if strict adherence was not possible, the local community had to conform to the local customs and follow a flexible and somewhat broad interpretation of the tenets of the Torah. The Talmudic sages reinforced this principle and ruled that *Derech Eretz* (local customs) took precedence over the Jewish customs (*hallacha*). "When you come to a town, follow its customs…" (*Baba Metzia* 86b). Inadvertently, the Jewish sages gave their blessing to a practice that at the time seemed quite unique, yet in the historical context of Judaism and China they ruled on a subject that emerged as the yang to the Chinese yin. The Yin (Chinese) culture followed the Confucian Way without ever asking a *kushia. Kushia* was the Talmudic way of saying "let's make it more difficult and ask further questions." It was absent from the Confucian Way. Confucius had rarely, if ever, explained the reasons behind his teachings. He had never asked the question "why", nor had he explained "how". He only stated his principles in broad terms never going into details. When asked for details he said that he was just a transmitter and not the originator. In other words, he discouraged opposing arguments. Only his followers provided general commentaries to the Chinese Way, but they too, stayed away from detailed explanations. Historically, the yin culture developed unique customs burdened with human connections (*guanxi*), while the relations with heaven were completely ignored. They were relegated to a yang culture. The yang culture in the Chinese mind was a culture that contained detailed commentaries and interpretations, in addition to the affairs of heaven. In essence, it fitted the Talmudic method of inquiry called *pilpul*.

Pilpul, (heated debates as "hot peppers") a Hebrew word that derived from the root for "pepper", became a synonym to

hairsplitting arguments on issues in matters of Judaism. Its analytical depth and rigor often bordered the absurd. Yet, Talmud sages felt that it was their responsibility to interpret the Torah to conform to the local *Derech Eretz*. To this end, they debated, argued, analyzed and then reviewed again every sentence, every phrase, every word, and every punctuation mark to apply the laws in the context of local Jewish customs. No stone was left unturned. The *Derech Eretz* was so important in Judaism that the sages determined that "it preceded the Torah" and "without *Derech Eretz* there would be no Torah."

Yet if we look at the origins of the Chinese Way and *Derech Eretz* we find that they stemmed from same principle. When Confucius was asked: "Is there one sentence that may serve as a rule of practice for one's life?" He answered: "What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." Five hundred years later Rabbi Hillel (1st century CE) faced the same question. His answer was very similar: "Do not do to others what you would not have them to do to you. This is the Torah. The rest is commentary… " Later this became known as the Golden Rule.

The obvious question is whether there was a cross-cultural influence or was this pure coincidence? Historically there is no evidence to indicate that Rabbi Hillel knew anything about Confucius or the Confucian Way. From a Jewish perspective, we may say that the Golden Rule was universal in nature, and therefore the similarity with the Chinese Way was either coincidence or perhaps Divine intervention. It simply matched the local customs to the words of the Divine. The Chinese would say that the Golden Rule followed the natural course of yin and yang, and the Confucian Way was an extension of it. It was rooted in common sense in the same way, as the yin was in tandem with the yang.

Lets ask a *kushia* in the Talmudic tradition: Does it mean that the

Golden Rule of Judaism and China had developed independently of each other? Apparently it did. We can find its roots in almost identical ancient traditions called the Five Human Relationships. In China it was called *wulun* and consisted of the interaction between: 1. Ruler and subject 2. Father and son 3. Elder brother and younger brother 4. Husband and wife and 5. Friend and friend. The first four relations established the correct social conduct between people of higher and lower ranks, between elders and youngsters, between husband and wife. In each of these cases, the primary emphasis was on respect for superiors, respect for the elders, and respect for husbands. Only was the relationship between friends and friends were on equal footings. But this relation was relegated to second in importance. Intentionally omitted from these relations was the relationship with God.

Significantly, the relationship with God was paramount in the yang culture. It was of primary importance in Judaism and dealt with the relationship between man and his surroundings. According to Rambam (1135-1204 CE) the Five Human Relationships in Judaism were: 1. Love your neighbor as thyself 2. Hate not your brother 3. Avenge not 4. Bear no grudge and 5. Love the stranger. Essentially, the *Derech Eretz* touched on every aspect of human life, from birth to the end of life. It guided the relationship between husband and wife, friend and friend, between Jews and non-Jews and between Jews and the local environment.

Why did the Chinese Way omit the relationship with God? Evidently Confucius understood that the relationship with God was outside the realm of the human understanding and he refused to address the issue. He explicitly said that he did not deal with the affairs of heaven. “Heaven is far from us and we should deal with the affairs on earth.” Thus the Confucian Way evolved into a pragmatic approach to daily issues while the affairs of Heaven were left to a yang culture with a primary focus on the relationship

with *Shangdi*, the Chinese *Elohim*. *Derech Eretz* on the other hand focused primarily on the affairs of Heaven, and accordingly it matched the percepts of the Torah with the local customs. Whether by Divine intervention or coincidence, *The Way of the Land* became the yang to the Confucian Way of yin

No Bread No Torah
No Degree No Honors
Tiberiu Weisz

(Reprinted from Asian Jewish Life #12)
At the Passover *seder* night, Jews asks: "*Ma nishtana*…Why is tonight different from all other nights?" Within the cultural setting of Judaism the question basically sums up the Jewish way of thinking: *we want to know* "*why?"* Irrespective of the topic or task, whether or not it is theoretical or practical, Jews want to know the reason behind issues or tasks. This mental attitude dominated Jewish thought from biblical times when Jews interpreted the Torah to adjust to the local circumstances to the hairsplitting debates of the Talmud culminating in what in modern Israel they say "why not?"
Similar to the *ma nishatana*, is the ancient Chinese quest for "*how can I know* [*to obtain it*]," that in modern times implies: "*how can I become wiser and more clever*?" "Day alternates with night but how can we know where is its origin?" The wise searches for the "roots" of things, while the clever want to know how to put knowledge to practical use. Those who can understand, analyze and judge matters are considered wise. And those who can utilize, deal with, and control tasks are considered clever.
Both the wise and the clever in traditional China started their education with the "investigation of things", or finding the source, that theoretically was in the surrounding nature. In reality however, they were in pursuit of the "roots" in their ancient writings. They looked for precedents. Once precedents were investigated, they wove the old with the new, the outcome of which indicated that knowledge was complete, and most significantly, everything could

be put to practical use, every matter or task could succeed and nothing would go to waste. This method of aligning the past with the present led the Chinese to connect history to the present and future. It also provided continuity to China, and at the same time, instilled high degree of pragmatism and elasticity in interpreting issues. Since antiquity Chinese education was geared toward these two goals, the search for the "roots" and how to take advantage of them.

Contrary to these goals was learning in Judaism that focused on theoretical, often abstract debates and to lesser extent on practical issues. The emphasis was on analyzing and exhausting the possibilities of each issue. The Torah was the main force behind Jewish education, while the Talmud instilled skepticism and a certain degree of idealism in the Jewish mind.

Comparatively speaking, the Chinese pragmatism is the *yin* to the Jewish *yang* of idealism, or in a narrower sense, the Chinese *how* is the yin to the yang of Jewish *why*, the anchors of their respective educational philosophy. Chinese sages in antiquity determined that the "investigation of things" was fundamental to Chinese education, and they believed that the past held the answers to the present and future. Furthermore, they believed that since history repeats itself, Chinese education must teach the past.

In contrast, the Jews believed that the Torah was the ultimate source of knowledge, and within the commandments of the Torah were the answers to the their survival. Unlike the Chinese classics, the Torah referred to neither history nor precedents, it only provided the tenets as a general guide. Consequently, the words of the Torah contained subtleties that could be explained only through analysis and common sense; it left each and every Jew to find his ways according to its laws.

These two opposing views contained the fundamental traditional epitome of education in both cultures. At the most basic level,

children in both cultures started to study at an early age. Traditionally, Chinese children as young as two years old were encouraged to recite a certain poem and write each character without error. By the age of four a child was expected to memorize the entire 250 lines of the *Premier One Thousand Characters* and by age of five his vocabulary was greater than the average villagers used in his entire life.

As they grew older, at least until age of ten, children spend hours upon hours in the never ceasing quest to conquer the art of calligraphy. First they had to master the right technique of holding the brush, vertical against the page and fill it with quick, confident strokes without blotting the ink once. At the same time the student labored hard at composing essays and poems. Each form of essay required special rules. A rule governed the number of words in a paragraph, the number of paragraph and their length, the type of language used – either highly formal or conversational. Other rules determined the stages of argument to be developed according to patterns of debate a thousand years old.

More flexible was the Jewish learning that started at age of five, or six in *Mizrahi* communities. The Babylonian Talmud did not consider age five ripe for learning: “Do not accept a pupil under the age of six; but at age of six, stuff him with knowledge like an ox”. Irrespective of the starting age, children went to *heder*, study hall, to start with the study of the Torah. The Jewish child faced completely different circumstances than their Chinese counterparts. Living in the Diaspora, children were exposed to at least two different cultures simultaneously: the Jewish one at home and the culture of the country they lived in the Diaspora, in essence growing up bicultural at an early age. In addition to their native tongue, Jewish children learned Hebrew at *heder*, the language the Torah. Equally important however was the perception that from the day that a Jewish child was brought to *heder,* he took the first steps

in his journey toward manhood.
At age of ten children started to learn reasoning with the reading of the *Mishna*, a primary companion to the Torah. Children learned the code of ethics including daily behavior under various social, economic, and religious conditions. Once a Jewish child reached *Bar mitzva*, (obligated to *mitzva*) at age thirteen, the pupil joined the adult community. He could attend a *minyan* (the quorum needed to pray). It was also the beginning of independent and in-depth learning. They started to study the Talmud, also called the Oral Law. Students discussed and debated questions of law, ethics and morality in minute detail from every possible angle until all the "what ifs…"and "whys…" were exhausted.
To solve Talmudic riddles, student needed lot of imagination, scholarship, memory, logic, wit, and above all, the courage to offer solutions to seemingly often-insoluble problems. Ultimately it provided each Jew with the tools to face ethical problems as they rose, and adapt to the constantly changing circumstances in the Diaspora. The history of the Jews is full of ingenious enough interpretations that solved immediate dilemmas, and at the same time, remained true to the spirit of the law.
Chinese children of fifteen were considered mature enough to be able to fully use their reasoning power. The Confucian litmus test in antiquity was simple: " If a student is told that one corner is a square and he cannot reply that the other three are also squares it is no use of repeating to him". Those who figured this out could start with *kai jiang* "paraphrasing and explaining," acquiring the basic knowledge and common sense, a premier to more profound learning.
Reasoning however was not among the forte of the Chinese education. The learning of the Classics was so uniform and predictable that one could ascertain the teaching of a person by what one read. When one read the *Book of Songs*, he was gentle

and honest. When one was thorough and farsighted he read the *Book of History*, When one read the *Book of Music*, he was profound and good, when one read the *Book of Changes*, he was pure, quite and subtle. When one read the *Book of Rites*, he was frugal, grave and respectful. When one read the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, he compared events and deeds. When one read the *Book of Filial Piety* one was compassionate of human relations. All these classics constituted the knowledge of virtue and perfection by the learned man.

According to Confucius (c. 551- 479 BCE), self-cultivation and studying the past led to developing new ideas. In practice however, the old was so embedded into the system that new ideas were extremely hard to advance. Yet, in the course of a lifetime a Chinese underwent significant, but predictable changes, and accumulated wisdom that taught the Chinese to be resourceful. The Chinese Way was like a pyramid of different perspectives built one over the other. In antiquity they believed in different spirits. Their earliest book of divination, *The Book of Changes* taught the Chinese that every story has a yin and yang side. Confucianism taught about ethics, knowledge and cultivation of the self. Daoism was about following the natural way; Legalism instituted ruthless pragmatism and order; Buddhism preached about letting go. Thus a Chinese person underwent a transformation from Confucian when everything went well, to a Daoist when things were falling apart to Buddhist when he approached death.

Jews also underwent profound transformations in a lifetime but they were contingent on local circumstances and individual cases. Each community or individual needed to adapt to their unique and constantly changing situations. Historically, kingdoms rose and fell and so did Jewish allegiance, but the faith of Jews in the Torah never wavered. A Jew is a Jew for life, from birth to death. Judaism was a clash between what ideally ought to be and reality. Ideally

the Jews ought to live in the Promised Land by the *mitzvot* of the Torah. In reality, however, they were scattered to all corners of the world, following the local conditions and adhering as best as they could to the tenets of the Torah. Every Jew faced everyday common dilemmas that required locally based solutions, such as how to separate the Sabbath from weekdays activities, or how to interact with local non-Jewish population, or, even more important how to reconcile the precepts of the Torah with the power of money. Fortunately, the Talmudic sages solved some of these issues by agreeing that the Torah is best, money is good and the local laws supersede Jewish law.

Both cultures strived to attain moral self -perfection, and enlightenment, but for different purpose. Chinese were practical, they studied for recognition and honors, and expected to earn a living from their studies: No degree no honors. For Jews, learning the Torah was part of their daily routine, and they did not expect any material gains from the study of Torah. Nevertheless, Jews needed to be creative enough to provide for their families Studying the Talmud did not lead to wealth, it rather boosted the confidence, pride and recognition of the scholar (*talmid hacham*) and the family. Yet the Torah also recognized that learning alone was not enough to survive, therefore included a *mitzva* (good deeds) that required scholars to make a living, a *parnusa* in Yiddish. Without *parnusa*, daily activities cannot be fulfilled; there can be no study, no Sabbath dinner, no proper education, no "social justice", and no donation to charity or as the Yiddish proverb said: *Ein Kemach, Ein Torah* - If there is no flour (bread), there is no Torah.

In China the notion of work had little to do with education, unless one studied for a civil service job. When Confucius, considered the first teacher in China had asked: "Is it not a pleasure to practice what one has learned?" he implied that people should join *shu*

yuan, book halls, to learn the basic tenets of the Chinese classics. *Shu yuan* offered employment and a somewhat elevated social status to aging teachers, to candidates who repeatedly failed the examination, and to retired minor officials. Student attended a *shu yuan* to acquire the basic skills of writing, reading and memorize some saying from the classics. In practice however, *shu yuan* had little to offer to students who wanted to use education for employment or to take the examinations.

By and large, education was not for everyone, and those who pursued it needed to conform to the rigid educational system. Even higher education was geared toward the civil service examination. The requirement followed centuries old format, composed in poetical composition of five or seven characters and determined style. It discouraged personal initiatives, creativity and "out of the box" thinking. Chinese acquired new knowledge by studying the old. Not surprising that the public took little interest in schools. The ultimate goal of classical Chinese education was to pass the examinations that brought not only high honors to the candidate but also to his immediate and extended family. The candidate got instant recognition and began the upward social mobility.

Jews on the other hand, were more modest, more idealistic and self- contained in their studies. They had never intended to make any material gains from reading the Torah. Historically Jews earned a living from manual labor and trades unrelated to the Torah. They did not aspire to high positions, or to become civil servants. But the unintended consequence of meticulous Talmudic studies was that it transcended to the non -Jewish world. Western societies adopted many Jewish ideas but officially denied the Jew the contributions and recognitions they deserved. Instead they used the Jewish wisdom to inflame anti Jewish sentiments.

Only in China, Jewish wisdom was equated with achievements and success. The Chinese perceived Judaism as an ancient culture just

like their own with an education that produced many famous Jewish people like Freud, Einstein, Marx and many other Jewish Nobel Laureates to name a few. Chinese pragmatism admired fame, recognition and wealth, and for that reason they respected Judaism. Unfettered by racial and religious prejudices, Chinese Jews in antiquity attained high position in the Chinese bureaucracy; many of them held PhD degrees. Such degrees entitled them to the highest honors, high ranks, and utmost respect in the Chinese social ladder. And indeed educated Chinese Jews were appointed to Commissioners [Governors], held titles of *Daifu* (highest title below nobility), and a Chinese of Jewish descent served as Prime Minister.

Unfortunately neither side has more than a superficial understanding of the other's culture. The Chinese study Judaism primarily to focus on the wisdom and success of the rich and famous Jews. They want to know how to translate the Jewish success to their advantage. For some reasons, the Chinese rarely mention the high price Jews have paid for their survival. Historical events such as the Inquisition, the expulsion from Spain or the Russian Pogroms are generally omitted in Chinese writings. By the same token Jewish perception of China derives from anecdotal observations and is based on animated communications and economic opportunities. How many Jews are aware of the profound influence of the Chinese mindset of *how can I know* [*to obtain it*]? Lack of cultural depth led both sides to liberally interpret each other's intentions. The Chinese flatter the Jews with words of recognition for their wisdom and wealth, while Jews praise the Chinese for not being anti-Semitic. Jews aggressively promote Holocaust studies to the Chinese, but the Chinese translate it as *Datusha* or the Nanjing Massacre, in memory of the atrocities committed in the city of Nanking by the Japanese in 1937. The Jews applaud the restoration of the one hundred five years old

synagogue in Harbin, but the Chinese use it as a concert hall. China welcomes the Jews just as Confucius said rhetorically: “Is it not a pleasure to have friends coming from afar?”… as long as they come to pay tribute to China.

Tiger Mom vs. Yiddishe Mame

Tiberiu Weisz

The rigidity of the traditional Chinese education and the flexibility of Jewish education came into sharp focus in modern times. In her book *Battle Hymn of Tiger Mother* (Penguin 2011) the author Amy Chua, a women of Chinese descent and a professor at Harvard, married to a Jewish husband, also a professor, created quite a stir with the way she raised her two daughters. She raised her children in a fashion that was strict by even traditional Chinese standards. With seemingly little input from her Jewish husband, Tiger Mom conceded: "even though my husband's not Chinese, I tried to raise my two daughters the same way my parents raised me." With one slight difference: like sons.

How did Chinese mothers raise daughters in traditional China? The general rule was that girls had no business learning even the rudiments of the written language. Chinese sages expressed their views that "Women without cultured ability are virtue itself." Nonetheless, clever and resourceful mothers circumvented this traditional limitation. They taught daughters directly, focusing on four accomplishments: Virtue, Deeds, Words and Work. These four goals constituted the general knowledge expected from Chinese women and wives. Only mothers' wisdom and cleverness guided the girls to achieve these goals.

Slightly different in method, were the Jewish mothers who also played similar roles in education. Though the Mishna and Talmud devoted an entire chapter to the status of women in Judaism, they both relegated women to subservient roles to their husbands. Jewish sages, like their Chinese counterparts, had little to say about the education of women, and less on learning. They simply banned women from studying in *heder* (study hall). One of the Talmud

sages said that “a girls place is at the spinning wheel” while another commented that: “If a girl can read a little, pray a little, then she is a real ‘intellectual”. Not surprising, both Jewish and Chinese cultures treated females as another “mouth to cloth and feed.” Their place was to attend the family and home.

Despite these restrictions, the reality was that Jewish women were the industrious, strong willed and the ones who managed the household. On top of that they quite often established a business of their own to support the family financially. To their assistance came their daughters who helped both at home and in business. Jewish mothers greatest concern for their daughters was to maintain these four accomplishments: chastity, morals, reputation, and virtues. These attributes also were considered vital for a good match.

Similarly, Chinese mothers taught their daughters practical things, ideally how to be good wife, a good mother, and her duties at home were to be obedient, chaste, hardworking and Confucian. They raised their daughters based on the Four Virtues: character, appearance, speech and work, the latter referring to household chores. In addition they were to observe the Three Dependences: dependence on father before marriage, dependence on husband after marriage, and dependence on son/s if widowed. Though mothers’ influence on sons was indirect and subtle, on daughters it was exactly the opposite, direct and in your face. In either case, mothers’ wisdom mattered: it was deeply rooted in daily life, human emotions in addition to being practical.

Pragmatism taught both Jewish and Chinese mothers to excuse their sons from the daily activities, sons needed to study. For a Jewish mother, an accomplished son was a “learned student and clever businessman” or in the words of the Talmud: “worldly gain is good and worldly loss is bad.” Or as my mother used to say: “Man makes money and not money makes the man”. Traditionally,

the ideal male role in Jewish family was the scholar, the diligent, promising yeshiva student. With the exception of the very young, the very old and the very learned, everyone was expected to make a living in addition to learning. A Jew without knowledge of the Torah was considered incomplete, and parents would bend the sky to educate their son. Jews valued more an educated son than an ignorant priest, as the Talmud said: “Better a learned bastard than an ignorant priest”. The Torah cemented the Jews together.

The ideal Chinese man was one who passed the imperial examination and got “degrees and honors” (AJL #15). Building wealth was the logical outcome of officialdom. Unlike in Judaism where the scope of schooling was for the sake of learning, the scope in China was to pursue recognition, honors and social status. As Confucius (c. 551- 479 BCE) said: “Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is perilous.” Chinese believed earnestly that history repeated itself and learning the past was the key to the future. Those who mastered the ancient tradition of writing and passed the examinations became officials who were to shape the course of China. That trait is still prevalent in China today. Those who failed to attain a degree were often disillusioned and turned to teaching, to assure a steady “rice bowl” (income). And those who went into trade or business had a very rudimentary education, far below the required standard. Farmers and craftsmen had nothing to do with schools.

Both Jewish and Chinese mothers took an active role in “guiding” their sons towards success. But success was defined differently in the two cultures. Beginning with birth, a newborn Jewish child developed a special bond with the woman who attended his mother at his birth, usually a midwife. That bond followed the child throughout life, and manifested itself in visits giving her gifts while she participated in all the festivities and celebrations of his life. She called the children she delivered “her babies.” And the

community called her *di Bobeh* (granny in Yiddish). While *di Bobeh* influence smoothed the rough social edges of the young man, the mother created an environment to influence his upbringing by taking care of his daily needs and comfort.
A similar tradition was in China. Beginning at birth, Chinese mothers relied on the centuries old superstitions called *Old Mothers Encyclopedia* (*Mama Da Chuan*). It was an unofficial guide to new mothers orally transmitted only and never ever in print. One of the most common superstitions made Chinese mothers very choosy as to who should be the first person let into the room after the baby was properly cleaned and wrapped? Auspicious was if a clever/smart boy came in and performed the ceremony called of *cai sheng* or "stepping on the birth" hoping that the new boy baby would be smart too. This superstition was not practiced with baby girls.
Cultural beliefs as such bound mothers of the two cultures and reflected in their names. In Judaism the *Yiddishe Mame,* a Yiddish word with roots in East Europe radiates an overprotective mother with endless self -sacrifice. In China, Tiger Mom or *huma* is a Chinese term that describes an overambitious mother who raises her children in the strictest of strict discipline. The term is often synonymous with fierce ambition to help her children conquer, overcome and finally to succeed in professional life. Only recently did this term come to the attention of Westerners with the publication of Amy Chua's book. Both the *Yiddishe Mame* and *Tiger Mom* strived for the same goal, to nurture the child to adulthood, to make him a *mentsh,* "a man as a *man*" in Judaism and a *ren,* "a man above *man*" in China.
Mentsh is a Yiddish term that means to attain the status of an accomplished human being, a whole person, a real adult with all the responsibilities and obligations. A *Yiddishe Mame* was proud if the sons did well in secular schooling but prouder if the sons could

recite a passage from the Torah to their father. Schooling was important, grades and outside activities were secondary to Jewish learning. Jews pursued learning with no specific goal in mind, it was for the sake of learning. Her greatest joy was to see her sons performing the *mizvot* (good deeds) for the sake of *mizvot*, culminating in being recognized as *mentsh* in his community.

(Wei) ren, literally means, "to be a man" and depicts the most basic character in the Chinese language, yet its meaning changes significantly in context. Chinese sages struggled with the question of "How can one become a *man* [and benefit from it]?" (*qi neneg wei ren* 岂能为人). Some defined *man* (*ren*) as: "Rites and righteousness are what makes a man above other *ren* (man)." Others as "the fulfillment of all filial duties and social obligation," while modern interpretations offered some context "to be not as an ordinary person but as a *ren,* a man above *man* in society at large." Each of these definitions carried their connotations. The first was to fulfill the ceremonial and public obligations; the second emphasized the obligations of children to parents, family and by extension the country. The last one came closer to the meaning of *mentsh* in Judaism, but not quite.

The definition of *ren* contained an inherent difference from *mentsh*. Just as *ma nishtana* differed from the Chinese *how can I know [to gain from it*] (see AJL #15), so did *mentsh* differ from (*wei) ren*, or yin from yang. In Judaism, a *mentsh* grew up in a classless society with allegiance to a code of conduct of an invisible and immortal deity called God. Every Jew was required to read the Torah (Law) or His words. That by itself required a basic education to each and every Jew, herein the name "people of the book." In addition, each individual was in charge of his destiny, and every individual male Jew was equal both in the eyes of the Torah and in the community.

Not so in China. A (*wei) ren* grew up in a traditional class

conscious society composed of *junzi* ," gentlemen" representing the ruling class and the *xiao ren* "the little people" or commoners. The *junzi* included the nobility, and by virtue of social mobility also the "mandarins" who acquired their status through education. At the head of this social pyramid was the Son of Heaven (emperor) who was considered a deity in China, but a mortal human being by Jewish standards. The *xiao ren* "commoners" were the masses, either with a rudimentary education of *shu yuan*, (book halls, see AJL #15) or not educated at all. Subsequently the *junzi* were privileged and often above the law while the commoners were subject to the law. Such a social distinction highlighted the unbridgeable gap between the class-conscious *ren* and the classless Jewish *mentsh*.

Tiger Mom brought this distinction into sharper focus. Initially she thought that perhaps a traditional upbringing with a modern education could combine the Chinese *ren*, "a man above *man*" with something like the Jewish *mentsh*. But first she had to face the low status of women in the traditional Chinese hierarchy. She skillfully weaved the Three Dependencies with modern Western education, and treated her daughters the same way as she would have treated sons. Her daughters were expected to attain the highest achievement in the field of study, or rather in the mother's field of choice. The daughters had no say in their upbringing, only mother's ambition mattered. In addition, she taught her daughters that the traditional Chinese values for girls: Virtue, Fate, *Fengshui*, Confucianism (religious merits) and *Dushu* (reading) could enhance their aspiration to succeed, but they had to aim higher than that to their highest potential. If an artist, be an accomplished artist, recognized in the field. If a scholar, be an academic with the highest-ranking schools. If married, be a *ren* first and only then follow the traditional Chinese values for wives.

Trying to weave the concept of (*wei) ren* with the Jewish *mentsh*

offered insurmountable challenges. Simply put, the two just did not mix. *Yiddishe Mame* saw her responsibility for the total physical way of life of a "real Jew." Her rules were more flexible, more in sync with real life situations. She made sure that the dietary laws were observed, that the food was kosher, milk and meat were separated, and that she kept the family harmony. Disciplining a child was more a reflection of the domestic climate, rather than the offense. Tiger Mom on the other hand applied the traditional upbringing for sons to raise her daughters "if you expect the child to be healthy, you must allow him thirty percent of hunger and the same percentage of cold. Experience has taught parents that if you give him too much to eat and too much to wear the child gets indisposed through the faults of the parents."

Puzzling however was the limited Jewish education of their daughters. "*Bat Mitzva* was Jed's terrain," said Amy Chua. The daughters "read from the Torah seamlessly at *Bat Mizva*," and the father "also approved the choice of 'Hebrew Melody' for violin at his daughter's *Bat Mitzva* recital." But beyond this, their Jewish upbringing was secondary. Tiger Mom followed what she knew best, the traditional Chinese Way that was handed down to her from her great, great, great… grandfather, the royal astronomer appointed by chief military staff in 1644. She imposed harsher rules to her daughters even by Chinese standards. Her rules:

"School work always came first

An A- minus is a bad grade

Your children always must be two years ahead of your classmates …

You must never compliment your children in public

If your children disagree with a teacher or coach, you must side with the teacher or coach

The only other activities your children should be permitted are those in which they can eventually win a medal

That medal must be gold."

In other words, no boyfriends, no sleepovers. Total respect for parents; daily drilling in math and Chinese from early age; and speaking Chinese at home. In addition there were daily school homework, hours of music practice, and reading. Expectations were so high that any grade below an "A" would invoke additional discipline. Her daughters went through the "ten years of *ku*, or bitterness. As the Chinese proverb says: "To be a man above *men*, you must endure the bitterest of all bitterness."

Such expectations were contrary to the aspirations of the *Yiddishe Mame*. Learning was just part of becoming a *mentsh* and wealth was a close second, though due to the economic and historical circumstances the two became contenders to higher social recognition. The ideal *mentsh* was learned in the ways of the Torah, generous and interacted easily in the community. Wealth was not necessary, but it certainly elevated the status of a *mentsh*. A learned man automatically belonged to the recognized status no matter how poor he was. Similarly, a wealthy men with little learning also belonged to the recognized class provided he used his wealth in accordance with the law of the Torah, and donated generously.

Tiger Mom justified her strict disciplinarian methods by pointing to the success of her daughters. They became accomplished academics and musicians according to the traditional Chinese Way. They became scholars, and successful in their own rights. The daughters attained the social standing, recognition and honors in the fields that Tiger Mom carved for them. They endured years of *ku* (bitterness) to become "men above *men*" in Chinese eyes. With the addition of two Jewish traits, that of generosity and interaction in the community, they could have also become *mentsh* in Jewish eyes.

Glossary of Chinese Terms

Chinese	English
Ba gua	Eight ideograms (Book of Changes)
Baihua	Plain language
Benlun	Fundamentals
Changmaozui	Long Hair Bandits
Cheng liang	Master Degree
Chu jia	Leave home
Dao	Way, path
Daojia	Daoism
Daoxin	Mind of Dao
Datong	Great Community
Datusha	Great massacre
De	Inner virtue/good deed
Di	Heaven
Fa	Method, Law

Fajia Legalists, strict interpreters of law
Fugu Return to the ancient ways
Ge-yi Matching Buddhist with Daoist concepts
Guocui National Essence
Guoxing National Character
Hara-kiri Commit ritual suicide (in Japan)
Huangtian Emperor
Jiao Belief, teaching
Jiaohui Teaching/secret society
Jifa Rules of Sacrifice
Jingji zizhi People who cherish the Written Word
Jingsehen Wenming Spiritual culture
Jinshi PHD
Ju Divine Dwelling/Providence
Junzi Gentleman, superior man
Li Proper Conduct, propriety, rites, ceremonies
Li Reason (Neo Confucianism)
Lixue School of reasoning
Mingjia School of names
Minquan Democracy
Minsheng Socialism
Minzu Nationalism
Qi Mass, substance
Qi wu Fasting shamans, mediums
Renxin Mind of man
Rujia Confucians
Sanmin Zhuyi The Three Principles (of Sun Yat-sen)
Semu Colored eyes (Term for foreigners)
Seppuku Commit Suicide (in Japanese)
Shang Above
Shangdi Lord on High, God
Shangtian Heaven on High
Shen Spirit
Shi Power
Shu Books/orders, statecraft, methods
Ta Tabernacle, dwelling
Tafu Grand tutor

Taiji Ultimate Extreme, Great Void
Tian Heaven, sky
Tiandao Way of the Dao/Way of Heaven
Tianli Forces of heaven
Tianlu Way of heaven
Tianming Mandate of Heaven
Tianmu Eyes of heaven
Tianshang Above Heaven
Tianxia Under Heaven
Tianzhao Celestial Empire (China)
Tianzi Son of Heaven (Emperor)
Wangdi King God
Wanguo Lose a country
Wei Servitude
Wen Literary
Wenhua Culture
Wuchan jieji wenhua da geming The Great Revolution to Establish a Working-Class Culture (Cultural Revolution)
Wu xing Five elements
Xia Under, below
Xiao Filial piety
Xiao ren Little people, Common, ordinary people,
Xin Sincerity, loyalty
Xin Mind, heart
Xin Wenhua New Culture
Xinxue New Learning
Xitong Datusha Holocaust, Systematic Killing
Yi Righteous
Yin yang Dark and light
Yong Application
You Everything
Yu yi ren I, the One/I am the Lord
Yue Music
Zhishi fenzi Intellectuals (Western-educated)
Zhong Loyalty
Zhongguo Middle Kingdom

Zu	Clan, family, community

Glossary of Hebrew Terms

Hebrew	English
Adonai	Lord
Alyia	Go “up” to Israel, Immigrate to Israel
Am haarez	Common people
Am Hasefer	People of the book
Am Israel	People of Israel
Amida	A Prayer (the 19 Benedictions)
Amoraim	Jewish sect
Apikorism	Non-believers
Beth ha-midrash	College/university
Beth Hillel	House of Hillel, lenient interpreters of the Torah
Beth Shammai	House of Shammai, legalists, strict interpreters of law
Birkat Haminim	The nineteenth benediction (against the sectaries)
Brit	Mandate of Heaven/Covenant
Cohanim	Priests
Cohen Hagadol	High Priest
Derech eretz	Proper Conduct, propriety
Derech hashamaim	Way of Heaven
Derech	Way
El	Heaven
El Al	Above Heaven
El Shadday	One of the Biblical terms for Elohim
Elohei Avikha	Elohim of your father
Elohim	Lord on High, God
Elokim	Elohim as pronounced by Orthodox Jews
Emuna	Belief, teaching
Eretz Israel	The land of Israel
Hacham	Sage

Hallacha	Law
Haskala	Enlightenment
Hasid	Jewish sect
Hesed	Kindness
Hochma	Reason
Hoshech v'or	Dark and light
Kabbalah	Mystic teachings
Kehilla	Clan, family, community
Keneseth Israel	Congregation of Israel
Maggid	Messenger of God
Maskil	Enlightened/Intellectual
Maskilim	Enlightened/Intellectuals
Melech Haolam	King of the World
Mishkan	Tabernacle
Mitzvah	Inner virtue/good deed
Mitzvoth	Good deeds
Sanhedrin	High Court
Sedarim	Orders
Semichut	Ordination of Rabbis
Shamaim	Heaven
Shamaim v'aretz	Heaven and earth
Shekhina	Divine Dwelling/Providence
Shema	A prayer
Shir, mizmor	Music
Shtetl	Small Jewish town
Tachat hashamaim	Under Heaven
Teshuva	Repentance
Tohu v'bohu	Ultimate Extreme, Great Void
Tzaddik	Righteous
Yeshiva	School
Yishuv	Settlement

Reference List

Ahad Ha'am. *Al Parashat Hadrachim* [At a Crossroad]: Selected Essays. Jerusalem: Dvir Co. Ltd. Tel Aviv& Hozzah Ivrit Ltd., 1948. [In Hebrew]

Alitto, Guy S. *The Last Confucian: Liang Shuming and the Chinese Dilemma of Modernity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979.

Bauer, Wolfgang. *China and the Search for Happiness: Recurring Themes in Four Thousand Years of Chinese Cultural History.* Translated by Michael Shaw. New York: The Seabury Press, 1976.

Ben-Sasson, H.H., ed. *A History of the Jewish People*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976.

Birnbaum, Philip. *Encyclopedia of Jewish Concepts*. New York: Sanhedrin Press, 1979.

Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Translated by Sian Reynolds. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers 1976.

Bright, John. *A History of Israel*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959.

Carmi, T., ed. and trans. *Book of Hebrew Verse*. New York: Penguin Books, 1981.

Chan, Wing-Tsit. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970.

Chang, Carsun. *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*. London: Vision Press Limited, 1958.

Chang, Carsun. *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought.* Vol. II. New York: Bookman Associates, 1962.

Chang, Chung-li. *The Chinese Gentry, Studies in their Role in the Nineteenth Century Chinese Society*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967.

Chang, Iris. *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*. New York : Penguin Books, 1998.

Cihai [Sea of Words].*Chinese Encyclopedic Dictionary*. Taibei, Taiwan: Zhonghua Book Company Ltd., 1976. [In Chinese]

Creel. H.G. *Chinese Thought: From Confucius to MaoTse-tung*. New York: Mentor Books, 1953.

D'Ancona, Jacob. *The City of Light: The Hidden Journal of the Man Who Entered China Four Years before Marco Polo*. Translated by David Selbourne. New York: Citadel Press Kensington Publishing Corp., 2000.

Dimont, Max I. *The Indestructible Jews*. New York: Signet, Signet Classics, Signet, Mentor, and Plume Books, 1971.

Dimont, Max I. *Jews, God and History*. New York: Signet Books, 1962.

Dubnov, Simon. *Divrei Yamei Am Olam* [A General History of the Jewish People]. Tel Aviv: Dvir Co. Ltd, 1956. [In Hebrew]

Dubs, Homer. H., trans., *The Works of Xunzi*. Taiwan: Confucius Publishing Co., 1974. [Chinese-English]

Esherick, Joseph W. *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987.

Feigin, Samuel I. *Misitrei Heavar*: *Studies in Bible and Ancient History* (From the Secrets of the Past). New York: Sefarim Publishers, 1943. [In Hebrew]

Finkelstein, Louis. *The Pharisees: The Sociological Background of Their Faith*. (2 volumes.) Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, Second Edition, Revised, 1946.

Fung, Yu-Lan. *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*. Edited by Derk Bodde. New York: The Free Press, 1966.

Gedaliahu, Alon. *Toldot Hayehudim B'erez Israel b'tkufat a Mishna v'Hatalmud* [The History of the Jews in Israel during the Mishna and Talmud Period]. Second Edition. Tel Avai, Israel: Hakibutz Hameuchad Ltd. Publishing House, 1954. [In Hebrew].

Gentzler, Mason J., ed. *Changing China: Readings in the History of China from the Opium War to the Present*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1977.

Glatzer, Nahum N. *The Judaic Tradition*. New York: Behrman House, Inc., 1969.

Goldman, Merle, and Leo Ou-fan Lee. *An Intellectual History of Modern China*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Graetz, Heinrich. *History of the Jews*. (6 volumes). Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1902.

Grieder, Jerome B. *Hu Shih and the Chinese Renaissance: Liberalism in the Chinese Revolution 1917–1937*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970.

Guttmann, Julius. *Philosophia Shel Hayahadut* [The Philosophy of the Jews]. Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1953. [In Hebrew]

Han Feizi Jishi [Collected works of Han Feizi with Interpretations].

Taibei, Taiwan: Holuo Dushu Publishing, 1974. [In Chinese]

Her, S., and Shrira. S. *Toldot Hasafrut Hatalmudit* [The History of the Talmudic Literature]. Tel Aviv: Haskala L'am Publishers, 1937. [In Hebrew]

Hinton, William. *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village*. New York: Vintage Books, 1966.

Ho, Ping-Ti. *The Cradle of the East*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1975.

Hourani, Albert. *A History of the Arab Peoples*. New York: MFJ Books, 1991.

Hsiao, Kung-chuan. *A History of Chinese Political Thought*. Translated by F. W. Mote. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Hsu, Immanuel C. Y. *The Rise of Modern China*. Taiwan: Rainbow Bridge Book Co., 1972.

Huang, Yen-kai. *A Dictionary of Chinese Idiomatic Phrases*. Taiwan, 1967. [Chinese-English]

Hunter, Neale. *Shanghai Journal: An Eyewitness Account of the Cultural Revolution*. New York: Beacon Press, 1971.

Husik, Isaak. *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1958.

Jiang, Weiqiao. *Zhongguo Zhexue Gangyao* [An Outline of Chinese Philosophy]. Taibei, Taiwan: Zhonghua Book Company, 1986. [In Chinese]

Kaufman, Yechezkel. *Toldot Haemuna HaYisraelit Mimei Kedem ad sof Bait Sheni*
[History of the Israelite Religion from Ancient Times to the End of the

Second Temple]. (2 volumes). Jerusalem: Bialik Institute and Dvir Co. Ltd, 1955. [In Hebrew]

Lao, Siguang. *Xin Pian Zhongguo Zhexue Shi* [History of Chinese Philosophy: A New Interpretation]. (3 volumes). Taibei, Taiwan: Sanmin Publishing, 2003. [In Chinese]

Laozi. *Daodejing* [The Book of the Way and Virtue]. Taiwan: Confucius Publishing House, 1974. [In Chinese]

Laqueur, Walter. *A History of Zionism*. New York: MJF Books, 1972.

Larned. J. N. *A New Larned History*. (12 volumes). Springfield, MA: C. A Nichols Publishing Company, 1922.

Latham R. E., trans. *The Travels of Marco Polo.* New York: Penguin Books, 1958.

Legge, James. *Liki* (*Liji*) (The Book of Rites). Taiwan: Qinchuan Publishing, 1974. [Chinese-English]

Legge, James. *Sishu* (*The Four Books—Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, the Works of Mencius*). Taiwan: Qinchuan Publishing, 1975. [Chinese-English]

Levin, Nora. *The Holocaust: The Destruction of the European Jewry 1933–1945*. New York: Shocken Books, 1973.

Lewy, Hans, Alexander Altman, and Isaak Heinemann, eds. *3 Jewish Philosophers*. Philadelphia: Meridian Books and The Jewish Publication Society, 1961.

Li, Chien-nung. *The Political History of China, 1840–1926*. Translated and Edited by Ssu-yu Teng and Jeremy Ingalls. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967.

Li, Dongfang. *Xishuo San Guo* (The Three Kingdoms: A Personal

Perspective). Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Publisher, 2000. [In Chinese]

Lo, Guanzhong. *Sanguo Yanyi* [The Romance of the Three Kingdoms]. Taibei, Taiwan: Renmin Publishing House, 1962. [In Chinese]

Lo, Jialun. 1976. Zhishi Fenzide Zeren [The Responsibility of the Intellectuals]. *Gujin Wen Xuan* 77: 4-8

Luo, Guang. *Zhongguo Zhexue Dagang* [An Outline of Chinese Philosophy]. Taiwan: Shangwu Press, 1999. [In Chinese].

Mao, Zedong. *Selected Readings From the Works of Mao Tsetung*. Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1971.

McNeill, William H., and Sedlar, Jean W. *Classical China, Readings in World History* (vol. 5). New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.

Meyer, Karl E., and Shareen Blair Brysac. *Tournament of the Shadows.* London: Abacus, 2001.

Na'aman, S., and A. Kasher. *The Middle Ages, General & Jewish History.* Tel Aviv, Israel: Amichai Publishers, 1967. [In Hebrew]

Neusner, Jacob, trans. *The Mishna*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988.

Owen, Stephen. *The Poetry of Meng Chiao and Hanyu*. London: Yale University Press, 1975.

Panikkar, K. M. *Asia and the Western Dominance*: *A Comprehensive Study of the European Impact on Asia, from Vasco da Gamma to the Mid-Twentieth Century*. New York: Collier Books, 1969.

Qi, Lang., Fei Zhenlang, and Wang Tianyou, eds. *Zhongguo Wenhua Daodu* [Chinese Civilization: A Source Book]. (2 volumes). Hong Kong: City University of Hong Kong, 2002. [In Chinese]

Sa, Mengwu. *Zhongguo Shehui Zhengzhi Shi* [Social and Political History of China]. (4 volumes). Taiwan: Haitian Publishers Ltd, 1971. [In Chinese]

Sachar, Howard Morley. *The Course of Modern Jewish History*. New York: Delta Publishing Co., Inc., 1958.

Sawyer, Ralph D., trans. and ed. *The Art of the Warrior: Leadership and Strategy from the Chinese Military Classics*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1996.

Scholem, Gershom G. *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. New York: Schocken Books, 1971.

Schwarz, Leo W., ed. *Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People*. New York: Random House, 1956.

Shujing Baihua Xinjie [The Book of History with a New Interpretation in Plain Chinese]. Taibei, Taiwan: Wenhua Dushu Company, 1967. [In Chinese]

Si, Maguang (1018–1086). *Zizhi Tongjian* [Popular Mirror of Finance and Government]. (2 volumes). Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Publishers, 1997. [In Chinese].

A chronicle of Chinese history covering a period of 1362 years from 409 BCE to 959 CE, the end of the Tang Dynasty. John K. Fairbanks translated this title as *The Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*. The author, Si Maguang, started this publication in 1066 in a gazette format, which he called *Popular Gazette*, but the emperor liked it and told him to "discard the details, highlight the financial and government aids, and concentrate on the essential," and then the emperor renamed it. Based on this information, I opted to translate it, reflecting the Chinese way of thinking.

Siao-yu. *MaoTse-tung and I Were Beggars*. New York: Collier Books,

1973.

Sima, Qian (145–90 BCE). *Shiji* [Record of the Historain]. Taibei, Taiwan: Wuyingdian Edition, 1964. [In Chinese]

Singer, Peter. *Pushing Time Away: My Grandfather and the Tragedy of Jewish Vienna*. New York: ECCO, An Imprint of HarperCollins, 2003.

So, Jenny F., and Emma C. Bunker. *Traders and Raiders on China's Northern Frontier*. Washington, D.C: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institute, 1995.

Spence, Jonathan D. *The Gate of the Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895–1980.* New York: The Viking Press, 1981.

Spence, Jonathan D. *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1966.

Taiping Tianguo [Heavenly Kingdom of the Taiping]. (2 volumes). Taiwan: Shibao Wenhua Publishers, no date. [In Chinese]

T'ung-Tsu, Chu. *Law and Society in Traditional China.* Paris: Mouton & Co. Publishers, 1961.

Twersky, Isadore. *A Maimonides Reader.* New York: Behrman House Inc., 1972.

Urbach, Ephraim E. *The Sages*. Translated by Israel Abrahams. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987.

Urinovsky, Aharon. *Toldot Hasafrut Haivrit Hahadasha* [The History of Modern Hebrew Literature]. (3 volumes). Tel Aviv, Israel: Izrael Publishers, 1962. [In Hebrew]

Waldron, Arthur. *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Waley, Arthur, trans. *The Book of Song*. New York: Grove Press, 1960.

Waltham, Clae, ed. *Shu Ching* (*Shujing*, Book of History). Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1972.

Wang, Dazhu. *Zhongguo Jindaishi* [Contemporary History of China]. Taiwan: Changqun Publishers, 1969. [in Chinese]

Wang, Liti, ed. *Zhongguo Chengyu Dacidian* [A Dictionary of Chinese Idioms]. Shanghai: Shanghai Dictionary Publishers, 1998. [In Chinese]

Ware, James R., trans. *The Saying of Zhuangzi.* Taiwan: Confucius Publishing Company, 1970. [Chinese-English]

Wei, Hongyun, chief editor. *Zhongguo Xiandaishi* [History of Modern China]. Beijing: Gaodeng Jiaoyu Publishers, 2002. [In Chinese]

Wilhelm, Richard. *The I Ching* (Book of Changes). Translated into English by Carry, F Baynes. New York, N.Y. Princeton University Press 1971, Eight Printing.

Wright, Arthur F., and David S. Nivison, eds. *Confucianism in Action*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1959.

Wright, Mary Clabaugh, ed. *China in Revolution: The First Phase, 1900–1913*. CNew Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968.

Xiaojing [Book of Filial Piety]. Taiwan: Confucius Publishing Co., 1973. [Chinese-English]

Yang, Falu. and Shuan Xu, eds. *Zhongguo Gudai Wenhuashi* [Cultural History of Ancient China). (3 volumes). Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2003. [In Chinese]

Yang, Rongguo. *Zhongguo Gudai Sixiangshi* [A History of Ancient Chinese Thought]. Beijing: Renmin Dabanshe, 1974. [In Chinese]

Zhang, Bibo. and Zhong, Guoyao, chief editors. *Zhongguo Gudai Beifang Minzu: Wenhuashi* [The Nationalities of Ancient Northern China: A Cultural History]. (2 volumes). Harbin: Hei Longjinag Renmin Publishers, 2001. [In Chinese]

Zhang, Liwen, and You, Mingzhe. eds. *Zhongguo Gudai Zhuming Zhexuejia Pingzhuan* [Famous Chinese Philosophers in Ancient China: A Critical Biography]. (3 volumes). Beijing: Jilu Bookstore, no date. [In Chinese]

Zhao, Yi, and Zhao Yifeng, chief editors. *Zhongguo Gudaishi* [History of Ancient China]. Beijing: Gaodeng Jiaoyu Publishers, 2003. [In Chinese]

Zhengkun, ed. *Shijing* [The Book of Poetry].Beijing: Zhongguo Wenshi Publishers, 2002. [In Chinese]

Zhou, Yaping, chief editor. *Guwen Guanzhi* [The Selection from Best of Ancient Chinese Literature]. Taiwan: Tainan Donghai Publishers, 1974. [In Chinese]

Ziv, Michael, Haim Ben-Sasoon, and Jacob Landau. *Divrei Hayamin* [History of the World]. (3 volumes). Haifa, Israel: Yuval Publishing Ltd., 1971. [In Hebrew]

INDEX

Abandon family
Abraham
Active Intelligence
Adonai
A-fa, Liang (1789–1855)
Agnostics
Ah Q
Ahad Ha'am (1856–1927)
Aliya
Alliance Israelite Universelle
Aluf Academy
Am-haarez
Amida
Amoraim
Angels
Annals of Spring and Autumn
Antiochus, Emperor
Anti-Semitism
Anu
Apikorism (non-believers)
Arab Peninsula
Arabia
Arabic
Arts
Ashkenazi
Assimilate
Assimilation
Assyria
Avant-guard
Ba gua, eight ideographs
Baal Shem Tov (1700–1760)
Bactria
Baihua plain language
Balfour Declaration

Bar Kochva (70–133 CE)
Barbarian
Batei avot
Bazel
Ben Zakkai, Johanan
Benlun
Bestial machinery
Beth Hamidrash
Beyond the Pass
Bible
Big Character Posters
Birkat Haminim
Bodhi
Brotherhood
Buddha
Buddhism
Bureaucrats
Bushido
Cairo
Canaan,
Canton
Caro, Joseph (1488–1575)
Catastrophes
Celestial Principle
Celestial will
Changmaozui
Chen Xianzhang (1428–1500)
Cheng brothers
Cheng Hao (1032–1085)
Cheng liang, M.A.
Cheng Yi (1033–1107)
Chessboard
Chosen People
Chosen Son
Christianity
Chu jia
chutzpah

Cordoba
Cohanim
Cohen Hagadol
Common denominator
Communist Manifesto
Communist Party
Confucianism
Confucius (551–479 BCE)
Constantine, Emperor
Constantinople
Cordoba
Corporeality
Countryside
Covenant
Cronos
Cultural Revolution
Cultural superiority
Dao learning
Daojia
Daoxin (mind of Dao)
Datong
Datusha
Daud, Abraham Ibn (1100–1180?)
David, King
Dazibao
De (virtue)
Death camps
Democracy
Descendants
Desecration of races
Despicable sect
Di
Dialectics
Discourse
District Keeper of Records
Divine right
Don Quixote

Dreyfus trial (1897)
Dufu (712–770)
Duke of Zhou
Dungan Rebellion (1862–1878)
Dwelling place (*Ta*)
Dynastic cycle
Education
Egypt
Egyptians
Eight Legged Essay
El Shadday
Elohei Avikha
Elohim
Elokim
Emancipated Jews
Emancipation
Emptiness
England
Enki
Enlil
Enoch
Eretz Israel
Ethics
Eusebius
Examinations
Excommunicate
Exile
Exilic Judaism
Existence
Expounding
Extermination
Ezra
Ezra, Abraham Ibn (1092–1167)
Fa law, regulations
Fajia
False theory
Family units

Fasting wizards
Fifth Commandment
Filial piety
Final Solution
Five Elements
Formula
Founding Fathers
Founi
France
Freedom
French Revolution
Fugu (return to old)
Fujian Province
Gabirol, Solomon Ibn (1020–1070)
Gaon, head of the Exilarch
Germany
Ge-yi
Ghetto
Ghettoes
Golden Age
Gordon, I. L (1830–1892)
Great Equality
Great Learning
Great Revolution for a Working-Class Culture
Great Void
Greece
Greek learning
Greeks
Guanzi
Guide to the Perplexed
Guo cui
Guo xing
Hallacha
Halevi, Yehuda (1085–1141)
Hallucinations
Han (Chinese)
Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE)

HaNagid, Samuel (993–1056)
Hangzhou
Hanyu (768–824)
Hara-kiri
Harmony
Harran
Haskala (Enlightenment)
Hasid
Head of the Exilarch
Heaven
Heavenly Peace
Hebrew
Herzl, Theodore (1860–1904)
Hesed
High Priest
Hillel
Himalaya
Hindu
Hitler Youth
Hodu (India)
Hokhma wisdom
Holocaust
Holy tongue
Homogeneous
Hong Xiuquan (1814–1864)
Housheng
Hovevei Zion
Huangtian
Humanity
Hundred Schools of Thoughts
Icons
Idols
Illiteracy
Imageless
India
Inner feelings
Inner strength

Inner virtue
Integration
Intellectual apprehension
Internal exile
Islam
Isolation
Israel
Israelites
Izmir
Jade gate
Japanese occupation
Jerusalem
Jesus
Jiaohui “teaching societies”
Jiayi
Jifa (Rules of Sacrifice)
Jingsehen Wenming (spiritual culture)
jingxi zizhi “People who cherish the Written Word”
Jinshi PHD
Joshua
Judah
Judea,
Judenstaat
Judges
junzi
Jurchen
Kabbalah
Kaifeng
Kalpa destiny
Kang Youwei (1858–1927)
Karaites
Khadi
Khalif Salah al-Din (Saladin)
kibbutz
King George III
King Wen
Knowledge

Kolhoz
Kook, Rabbi Abraham Isaac (1865–1935)
Koran
Krakov
Kunlun range
Labor camps
Lamb
Land of Canaan
Levites
Li (ceremonies, rites)
Li (reason, logic in Neo-Confucianism)
Li Ao (772–841)
Li Bo (701–762 CE)
Li Kui
Li Tai Bo (701–762)
Liang Qichao (1873–1929)
Liang, Shuming (1893–1982?)
Liao
Liji
Literati
Long Hair Bandits
Lovers of Zion
Loyalists
Loyang
Luria, Rabbi Isaac (1534–1572)
Maccabean Revolt (63–40 BCE)
Maggid
Maimonides, Rabbi Moses ben (1135–1204); see, Rambam
Maitreya Buddha
Manchu
Manchu
Mandate of Heaven
Manual labor
Mao Zedong (1873–1976)
Marranos
Marx, Karl (1818–1883)
Maskil

Maskilim
Masorah
Masoretes
May Forth Movement (1919)
Media
Mencius (372–289 BCE)
Mendelssohn, Moses (1729–1786)
Mental prowess
Mentsh, as a man
Messenger of God see *maggid*
Messiah
Messianic movements
Middle Age
Middle East
Middle Kingdom
Midrashim
Mikva ritual bath
Ming Dynasty (1368–1644)
Mingdi, Emperor (58–76 CE)
mingjia
Minquan, Democracy
Minsheng, Socialism
Minzu, Nationalism
Mishenh Torah
Mishkan, tabernacle
Mishna
Mishne Torah
Missionaries
Mizva
Mitzvoth
Mongol Dynasty (1279–1368)
Mongols
Monotheism
Moors
More Nevuchim
Mount Sinai
Muhammad (570–632)

Multiply
Musa ibn Maymun (Rambam) (1135–1204)
Music
Muslim Rebellion (1855–1873)
Muslims
mystics
Nanjing Massacre (December 13, 1937)
Nankai
National Character
National Essence
National heritage
National spiritual center
Nationalism
Nationalists
Natural Evolution
Nazar, speculation of reason
Nazis
Nest of Happiness
New China
New Culture
New Learning
New Order
New Testament
New Text
Nien Rebellion (1851–1868)
Nineteen Benedictions
Nirvana
Nosse sebel, burden-bearers
O Yangxiu (1007–1072)
Officials
Old Testament
Opium War (1838–1842)
Oracle bones
Oral Law
Ottoman Empire
Pacified
Paganism

Pagodas
Pale of Settlement
Palestine
Pangu
Paris
Peasants
People Mountain People Sea
People of the Book (*ahl al-kitab*)
People who Cherish the Written Word
Period of the Judges
Philosophy
Physical body
Plain language
Portable religion
Prayers
Praying
Priestly class
Priests
Prince Tang
Prince Wu
Proletariat
Propriety
Proselytes
Qi (essence)
Qianlong, Emperor (1736–1795)
Qin Dynasty (225–206 BCE)
Qing Dynasty (1644–1911)
Qi-wu (fasting mediums)
Rambam (1135–1204)
Rashi (Rabbi Solomon Yizhaki 1040–1105)
Reactionaries
Reason
Red Guards
Redemption
Re-education
Religious Societies
ren (*mentsh* in Yiddish)

Ren Zong, emperor
Renxin mind of men
Repentance
Resurrection
Righteousness
Ritual killing
Rituals
Romance of the Three Kingdoms
Romans
rujia
Rules of Sacrifice
Rural
Saadia Gaon (882–942)
Sacrifice
Sage
Sages
Salon Jew
Salonica
Samuel
Samurai
Sanhedrin
Sanmin zhuyi
Santian Hui
Sanskrit
Scholars
Scriptures
Secret Societies
Sedarim orders (Mishna)
Sefad
Self-fulfillment
semichut (ordination of Rabbis)
Semu (colored eyes)
Seppuku
Shabbatai Zvi (1626–1676)
Sabbath
Shadow government
Shamaim v'aretz

Shamans
Shamen
Shammai
Shang Dynasty (ca. 1760–1066 BCE)
Shangdi
Shanghaijing
Shangtian
Shangyang
Sheep
Shekhina
Shema
Shen
Shen Buhai
Shen Dao
Shi (power)
Shtetl
Shu (art, statecraft, method)
Shu (books/chapters)
Shui Hu Chuan
Shulchan Aruch (Prepared Table)
Si Maqian
Silk Route
Sinners
Six Dynasties (221–588 CE)
Six Venerable
Social ladder
Sofrim
Solomon, Ibn Gabirol (1020–1070)
Solomon, King
Son of Heaven
Song Dynasty (960–1279)
Spain
Speculation
Spirits
Spiritual culture
Sub humans
Sudden enlightenment

Sumerians
Sura
Sutras
Syria
Systematic Killing
Tafu Grand Tutor
Tacitus
Taiji
Taiji Great Ultimate
Taiping
Taklamakan Desert
Talmud
Tangible
Teachers
Teaching societies
Temple
Temples
Ten Commandments
Teshuva
Three Principles
Throne of David
Tiandao
Tianli
Tianming
Tianmu (heaven's eyes)
Tianshang
Tianxia (all under heaven)
Tianzhao (Celestial Empire)
Tianzhu
Tianzi
Tohu v'bohu
Tongmenghui
Tonzhi Restoration (1860)
Torah
Traditionalists
Treason
Treaty of Versailles (1918)

Triad Society
Twenty-One Demands
Tzaddik
Tzaddikim
Ukraine
Ultimate Extreme
Undesirables
Universe
Untementshen
Ur
Urartu
Urban
Utopia
Velvet Revolutionary
Vernacular
Versailles
Vespasian
Virtue
Wailing Wall
Wangguo
Wang Yangming (1472–1529)
Wangdi
Warlords
Water Margin
Way of the Dao
Wei servitude
wen culture
Wen, Emperor
Western Jin Dynasty (265–316 CE)
White Lotus
Wizards
Worshippers of Shangdi Teaching Society
Wu (nothing)
Wu wei
Wu xing
wuchan jieji wenhua da geming
WWI

Xia (Dynasty)
Xianzheng (Emperor)
Xiaoren
xin (faithfulness)
xin (mind)
Xinwenhua
Xinxue
Xitong Dutusha
Xiyu
Jabneh
Yad Hazaka
Yellow River
Yellow Turban
Yiddish
Yin yang
Yin Yang School
Yom Kippur
Yong (application)
You (everything)
Yu yi ren (I, the One)
Yumen (Jade Gate)
Zealots
Zeus
Zhang Cai (1020–1077)
Zhish fenzi
zhong (loyalty)
Zhongguo (China)
Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073)
Zhou Dynasty (1066–256 BCE)
Zhu Xi (1130–1200)
Zion
Zionism
Zionists
Zohar

---

[1] The Five Relationships (*Wulun*) became the cornerstone of the Confucian society.

[2] *Zhongguo Dabaike Quanshu: Fa Xue* [The Complete Encyclopedia Sinica: Law] (Chinese

Encyclopedia Publishers, Beijing 1984) [In Chinese]

[3] Also called Tortoise Shells, the oracle bones were an earlier source of knowledge of divination, sacrifices, etc., but most surprising was the advanced rhythm of the seven-words-in-a-line poems, which indicate that Chinese literature is older than first thought. For an abstract, see: Liu Fengguang, "Seven-Words-in-a-Line Poems in the Inscriptions on the Tortoise Shells," *Journal of Liaoning Normal University* 25:5 (2000): 5. [In Chinese]

[4] The Analects, the Great Learning, the Doctrine of the Mean, and the Book of Mencius became known as the Four Books.

[5] The origin of these two concepts is surrounded in obscurity. The only thing that is certain is that they originated far back in antiquity.

[6] Though the people of China originated from the Yin tribe, this is distinguished from the *yin* in the *yin/yang*. The two characters are different and not related. For a short discussion of the Yin origin of China, see Hsiao 1979, 34–35.

[7] Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), page 135.

[8] *Am Israel* (the people of Israel) or *Keneset Israel* (the Congregation of Israel).

[9] The oracle bones were incisions of characters on tortoise shells and bones. They were the oldest writings in China, dated to 2800–2500 BCE.

[10] Legge's translation: "Heaven having produced the inferior people made for them rules and teachers with the purpose that they should be assisting God, and therefore distinguished them throughout the four quarters of the land. Whoever is offended, and whoever is innocent, here am I to deal with them. How dare any under heaven give indulgence to their refractory will?"

[11] Legg's translation: "Though a man may be wicked, yet if he adjust his thoughts, fast, and bathe, he may sacrifice to God."

[12] The Son of Heaven was the spiritual leader of China, thus, in the mind of the Chinese he "assisted Heaven."

[13] For the presence of Jews at the outskirts of China in the second century BCE, see my translation of *The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions*, (iUniverse, 2006).

[14] This li (ceremonies) must not be confused with li (reason) in chapter 5. Although they are pronounced the same, they are two different characters with different meanings in Chinese.

[15] Dunhunag today

[16] The original meaning of this term is a carrying basket for earthworks.

[17] I used the term *sages* to denote a broader use of the biblical term of *the Judges.*

[18] Prince Tang received the Mandate of Heaven to become the Son of Heaven. He was the founder of the Shang Dynasty in ca. 1766 BCE.

[19] My translation follows closely the original Chinese text and the words in parentheses are my interpretation based on Chinese commentaries. I also noticed that this version correlates to biblical literature: "The burnt offering that the prince offers to the Lord on the Sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish … On the day of the new moon, he shall offer a young bull without blemish and six lambs and a ram which shall be without blemish" (Ezek. 46:4, 6).

For comparison purposes, here is Legge's translation: "On the first day of the first month … Xun examined the pearl-adorned turning sphere with its transverse tube of jade and reduced to a harmonious system the movements of the Seven Directors. Then, Xun sacrificed especially, but with ordinary forms, to God; sacrificed with reverent purity to the Six Honored Ones" (Waltham 1972, 12─13, Legge 1974, 1–6). According to Legge, the Seven Directors designated the seven stars of the Big Dipper, while Six Honored Ones remained unidentified.

[20] China

[21] Lo 1976, 4-8.

[22] This li (rites) should no be confused with li (reason, logic) in chapter 5. They are two different Chinese characters. For a more detailed analysis of li (rites) in English, see T'ung Ch'u 1961, 227-241.

[23] (Kaufman 1955, 4:70) "Israel was created as a collective name for a virtuous personality."

[24] Italics are mine.

[25] For a slightly different translation, see page 253. *Gui* referred to land outside the Middle Kingdom, probably Xiyu, the Western Regions, in today Gansu Province.

[26] King Wen (1171–1121 BCE) was the legendary virtuous king of China and founder of the Zhou Dynasty.

[27] Cihai, under the entry of *ta* and *Hanji.*

[28] There is much uncertainty surrounding Hanji. According to some Chinese sources, Hanji was the niece of King Xuan (828–781 BCE) who ordered Lord Han to go to the Pass (non-Chinese territory) to marry Hanji and bring her back to China.

[29] Yen was a non-Chinese tribe in today's Hebei province.

[30] This is the main theme of The Great Learning, one of The Four Books.

[31] *Mentsh* is the Yiddish word for "man *as a man.*" The Chinese concept *ren*, "as a man," differs from mentsh in that that in Yiddish it referred to a human being in the moral and ethical sense. It was not merely a person but a person with worth and dignity, one who can be respected. In Chinese it referred to an educated scholar who attained his worth and dignity through literary knowledge.

[32] For a slightly different translation, see Dubs 1974.

[33] This phrase was used by Bangu (d. 92 CE), the author of the *Hanshu* (The Book of the Han Dynasty) in the chapter on the 'The Chronicles of Yiwen' to describe the freedom of expression during political instability. Leaders are preoccupied with political and military maneuvering and pay little attention to theoretical ideas. "Let a hundred flowers bloom and let one hundred schools of thought contend" became synonymous with freedom of expression in China.

[34] Rabban, "our master" was a title that was reserved for the rabbinic patriarch from about 20 CE.

[35] The yellow patch was a symbol of respect in China; high-ranking officials wore it to indicate their august position. Jews were forced to wear a yellow patch to distinguish them from gentiles; for them it was a symbol of humiliation. In the Middle Ages, Caliph al-Mutawakkil (847–862) decreed that all nonbelievers, Christian and Jewish, were to wear yellow signs on their hats or other parts of the clothing when in public. Women were to wear yellow skirts (Dubnov 1956, 227). In Nazi Germany, Jews were forced to wear a yellow Star of David to separate them from the rest of the population.

[36] Roughly, the area of Gansu Province in today's China.

[37] Bactria, in today's northern Afghanistan, was a small kingdom bordering the Western Region and a buffer zone between China and the West. It had major trading centers for the Silk Road.

[38] Yumen is called Dunhunag today, and it is the Pass that was mentioned several centuries earlier by Laozi and Mencius.

[39] See Chapter 1, "Elohim and Dao."

[40] The first reliable translation of Buddhist texts appeared in China in the Eastern Qin Dynasty (320–420 CE).

[41] Water nourished wood, but it also extinguished fire. Fire produced earth (rich minerals), but it also burned wood. Wood fed fire but destroyed earth, and earth produced metal but destroyed (absorbed) water.

[42] After 1127 CE, China was divided into the Northern Song (*Qin*) and Southern Song Dynasties (1127–1268).

[43] *Housheng* is an expression of admiration by a member of the older generation in reference to a member of the younger generation that is to be respected, as that person has the potential of surpassing his predecessors.

[44] This term was used by Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073), Zhu Xi's predecessor.

[45] For details, see my translation of *The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions* (iUniverse 2006).

[46] Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644.

[47] In 1126, the Jurchen "barbarians" defeated the Song and created a dynasty called the Qin. The Song emperor was forced to move the capital to Hangzhou, which became the capital of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279).

[48] Kaifeng was also the site of the Jewish temple in China. For details and a translation of the stone inscriptions, see my book, *The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions* (iUniverse 2006).

[49] The name derived from the yellow headband worn by members of the society.

[50] Maitreya was the future Buddha, one "who has not appeared yet." His residence was the Tusita heaven, a place reserved for all those Buddha who had only one round to absolve on earth to free themselves of the last traces of karma.

[51] The conflict between the Nationalists and the Communists

[52] Active in the sixth century CE.

[53] Twelfth century CE.

[54] Marranos (swine in Spanish) were those Jews who converted to Christianity and in many cases secretly practiced Judaism.

[55] Rabbi Kook felt that time had come to adapt the tradition of Judaism to modem times. He re-interpreted the Jewish religious practices in terms of the nationalist ideology of Zionism.

[56] Huang was the ruthless emperor who unified China.

[57] *Cathay* is an archaic term for China.

[58] 1665–1666. Shabbatai Zvi prophesized the death of the Sultan and was imprisoned. Despite being in jail, Shabbatai was allowed to continue his messianic activities through intermediaries.

[59] This was a specific Jerusalemite designation of Elohim, whose name was connected with the Temple in Jerusalem when the ark was transferred.

[60] Even though he was in jail, he was treated with exceptional reverence; he was allowed to give audiences while sitting on a throne like chair.

[61] The Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) was established by the Manchu, non-Chinese occupiers.

[62] For details, see Spence 1966 chapter 5 in English, and the *Taiping Tianguo* in Chinese.

[63] The Qing Dynasty 1644–1911.

[64] Moses Mendelssohn was the father of the Jewish *Haskala* and emancipation movement in Germany.

[65] A Jewish poet born in Vilna, Gordon was among the founders of new Hebrew literature and journalism.

[66] For reference purposes, I provide here the entire quotation in context as translated by Legge: "Some labor with their minds, and some labor with their strength. Those who labor with their minds govern others; those who labor with their strength are governed by others. Those who are governed by others support them; those who govern others are supported by them." Legge translated the character *shi* as

support, and I retained the original meaning of "food, to feed, to nourish."

[67] By some estimates, it took over three hundred years.

[68] *Shema Israel Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Ehad* : "Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our Elohim, the Lord is One" (Deut 6:4) The Hebrew version consists of six words proclaiming the Oneness of Elohim and the loyalty of Israel.

[69] The Pale of Settlement was a strip of land that stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea, within the borders of Tsarist Russia, where the Jews were permitted to live. It was in effect between 1791 and 1917.

[70] *Shtetl* was a small town or village in East Europe where Jews lived. There were no main streets, no walls, no gates to be locked and Jews were free to come and go as they pleased.

[71] This is a variation on an idea from the Talmud: "All Jews are responsible for one another" (*Shavuot* 39A).

[72] Italics are mine.

[73] Italics are mine.

[74] The First Zionist Congress.

[75] *Bagu wenzhang*. This was a standardized writing style adopted in 1487 for writing examination papers. It consisted of eight main headings and about seven hundred characters, and made much used of balance and antithesis. Kang Youwei claimed that the "eight-legged essay" had done more harm to the educational system than the burning of the books in 221 BCE.

[76] The association of the Lovers of Zion (*Hovevei Zion)* consisted of several groups. There was the Hibbat Zion (Love of Zion) established in 1881, then there was Ahavat Zion in St. Petersburg [Russia] then there were over thirty associacions in Romania. The charter of these associations was to promote Jewish emigration to Palestine.

[77] On January 18, 1915, Japan delivered to China Twenty-One Demands, which supported the return of the monarchy in China under the auspices of Japan. Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) agreed to the Japanese demands, but most of the Chinese people considered it a great humiliation.

[78] The Doctrine of the Mean is part of the Four Books, equal in importance to the Confucian Analects.

[79] The Eight Trigrams, also known as the Book of Divination is another name for the Book of Changes (*Yijing*).

[80] This is an abridged translation of the full article reprinted in the *Xinhua wenchai* 1984, vol.1. For a slightly different version, see Goldman 2002, 272–273.

[81] In those days, students were expected to commit to memory the Four Books, whether or not they understood the meaning, and long hours were devoted to memorization and recitation. Teachers frequently beat the students. Chinese historical novels exerted great influence on Mao, and the *Sanguo Yenyi* (Romance of the Three Kingdoms) was his favorite. It was the Chinese version of Robin Hood.

[82] The *xiaoren*, "little people," in China were the ordinary, uneducated people. The term carried the same connotation as *am haarez* in Judaism. *Junzi*, "superior men," constituted the educated elite in the classical tradition.

[83] Refers to "The Story of Ah Q" by Lu Xun (1881–1936). Ah Q is the antihero, a mentally unstable beggar who admits to crimes that he did not commit and is finally executed in 1911. The story is a mirror image of China of the early 1900s.

[84] The rule of the judges started with Joshua and ended with Samuel, a period between the fourteenth and the tenth century BCE.

[85] The sayings of Mao Zedong (1883–1976) were compiled in a small book with a red cover and

distributed to every Chinese person.

[86] After the death of Mao Zedong in September 1976, four leaders of the Cultural Revolution—Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chunqiao, Jiang Qing (Mao's wife), and Yao Wenyuan—were arrested and accused of having engaged in evil conduct. Hence the term "Gang of Four."

[87] Sawyer translated this as "profits" (Sawyer 1996, 83).

[88] *Datusha*, "Great Massacre," a.k.a. Holocaust

[89] Xuxin (Translator). Chinese edition of *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Nanjing 1994.